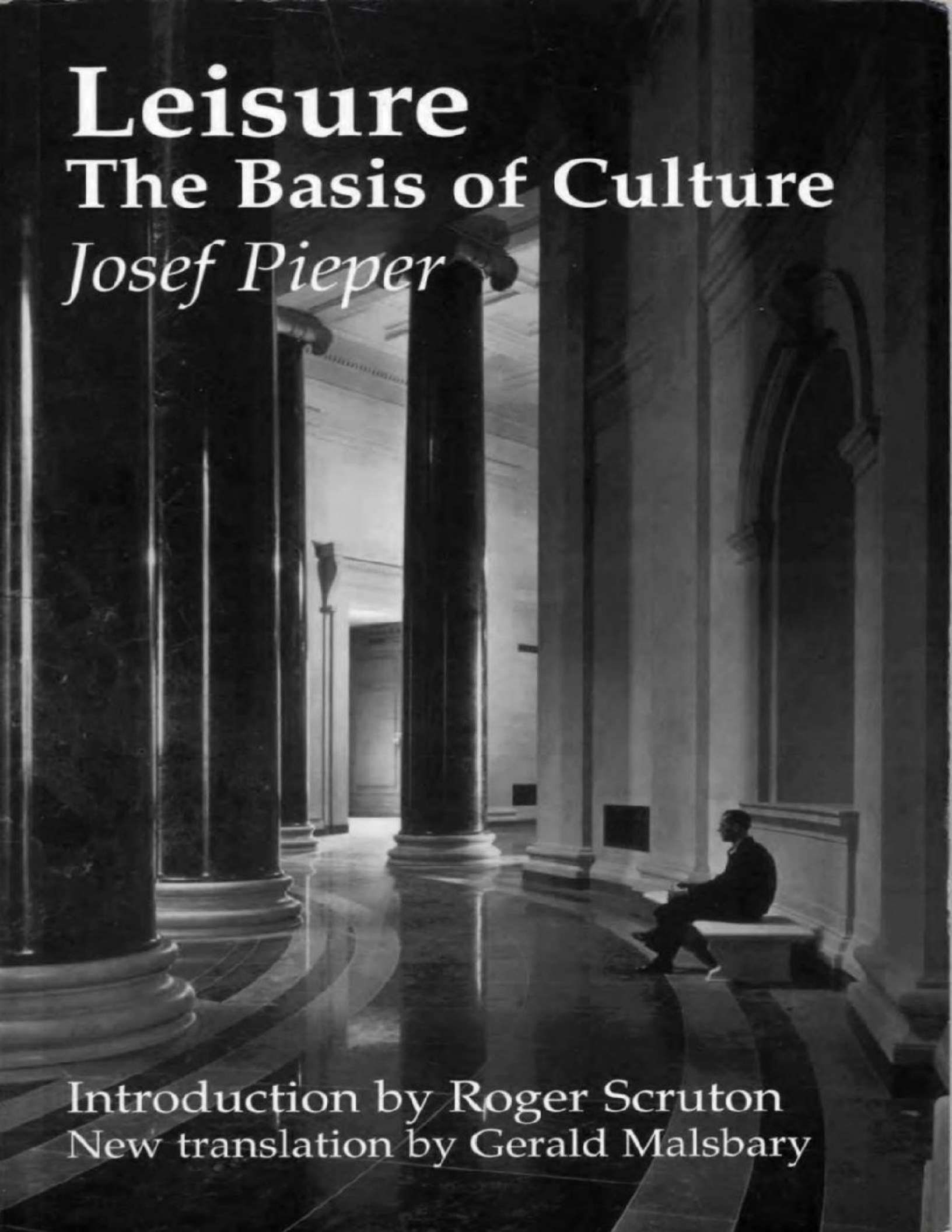
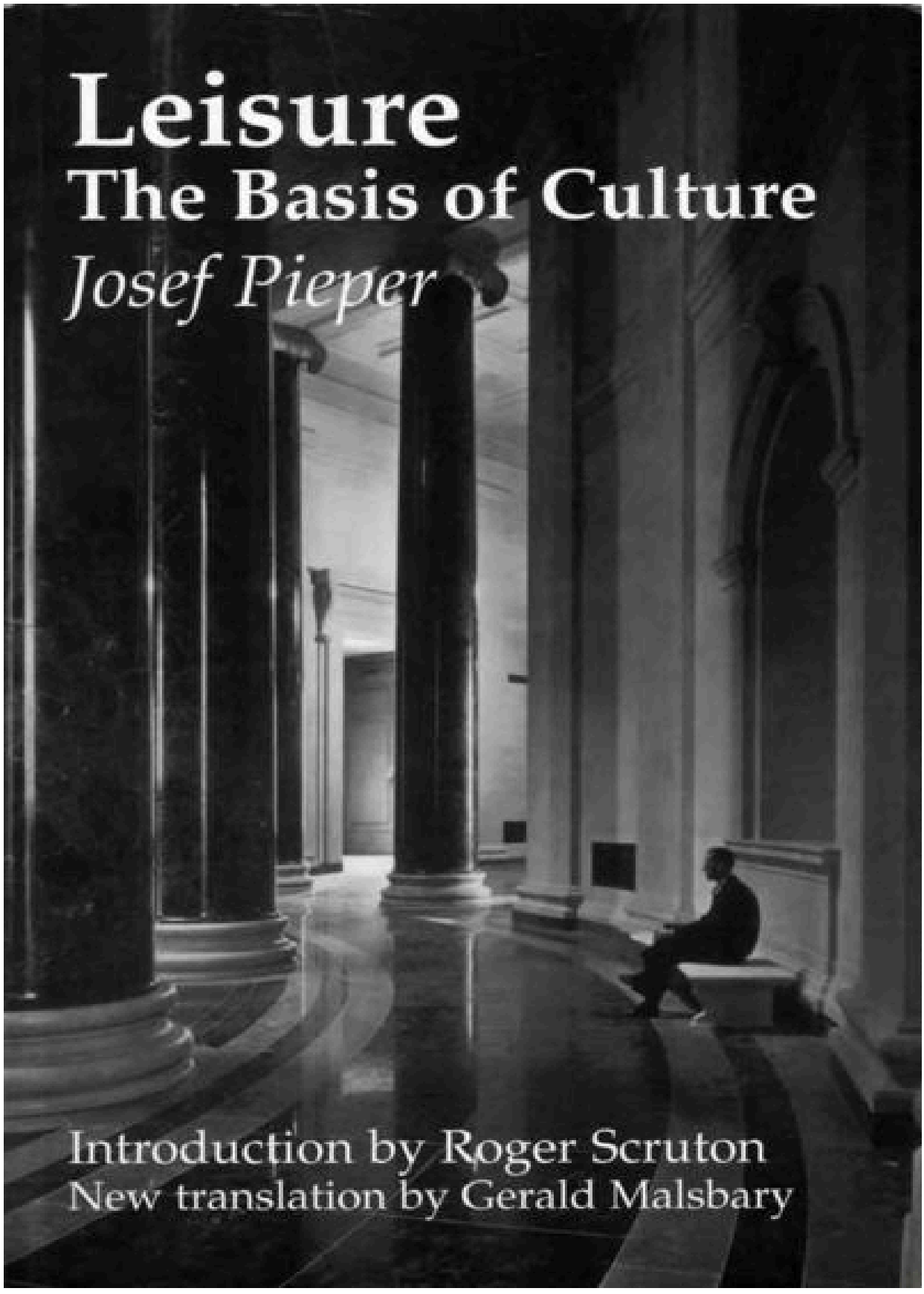
Leisure
The Basis of Culture

Josef Pieper



Introduction by Roger Scruton
New translation by Gerald Malsbary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1998

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INTRODUCTION
by T. S. Eliot

The complaint is frequently heard that our time has little to boast of in the way of philosophy. Whether this deficiency is due to some ailment of philosophy itself, or to the diversion of able philosophical minds towards other studies, or simply to a shortage of philosophers, is never made clear: these are divisions of the question which are apt to become confused. Certainly, "Where are the great philosophers?" is a rhetorical question often asked by those who pursued their philosophical studies forty or fifty years ago. Allowing for the possibility that the great figures of our youth have become magnified by the passage of time, and for the probability that most of those who ask the question have not followed modern philosophical developments very closely, there remains some justification of the lament. It may be merely a longing for the appearance of a philosopher whose writings, lectures and personality will arouse the imagination as Bergson, for instance, aroused it forty years ago; but it may be also the expression of a need for philosophy in an older meaning of the word — the need for new authority to express *insight* and *wisdom*.

To those who pine for philosophy in this ampler sense, logical positivism is the most conspicuous object of censure. Certainly, logical positivism is not a very nourishing diet for more than the small minority which has been conditioned to it. When the time of its exhaustion arrives, it will probably appear, in retrospect, to have been for our age the counterpart of surrealism: for as surrealism seemed to provide a method of producing works of art without imagination, so logical positivism seems to provide a method of philosophizing without insight and wisdom. The attraction which it thus offers to the immature mind may have unfortunate results for some of those who pursue their undergraduate studies under its influence. Yet I believe that in the longer view, logical positivism will have proved of service by explorations of thought which we shall, in future, be unable to ignore; and even if some of its avenues turn out to be blind alleys, it is, after all, worth while exploring a blind alley, if only to discover that it *is* blind. And, what is more important for my theme, I believe that the sickness of philosophy, an obscure recognition of which moves those who complain of its decline, has been

present too long to be attributable to any particular contemporary school of thought.

At the time when I myself was a student of philosophy — I speak of a period some thirty-five to forty years ago — the philosopher was beginning to suffer from a feeling of inferiority to the exact scientist. **It was felt that the mathematician was the man best qualified to philosophize.** Those students of philosophy who had not come to philosophy from mathematics did their best (at least, in the university in which my studies were conducted) to try to become imitation mathematicians — at least to the extent of acquainting themselves with the paraphernalia of symbolic logic. (I remember one enthusiastic contemporary who devised a Symbolic Ethics, for which he had to invent several symbols not found in the *Principia Mathematica*.) Beyond this, some familiarity with contemporary physics and with contemporary biology was also prized: a philosophical argument supported by illustrations from one of these sciences was more respectable than one which lacked them — even if the supporting evidence was sometimes irrelevant. Now I am quite aware that to the philosopher no field of knowledge should come amiss. The ideal philosopher would be at ease with every science, with every branch of art, with every language, and with the whole of human history. Such encyclopaedic knowledge might preserve him from excessive awe of those disciplines in which he was untrained, and excessive bias towards those in which he was well exercised. But in an age in which every branch of study becomes more subdivided and specialized, the ideal of omniscience is more and more remote from realization. Yet only omniscience is enough, once the philosopher begins to rely upon science. No one today, I imagine, would follow the example of Bosanquet, who in his *Logic* leant so heavily upon illustrations drawn from Linnaean Botany. But while the philosopher's exploitation of science is now likely to meet with severe criticism, we are perhaps too ready to accept the conclusions of the scientist when he philosophizes.

One effect of this striving of philosophy towards the condition of the exact sciences was that it produced the illusion of a progress of philosophy, of a kind to which philosophy should not pretend. It turned out philosophical pedagogues ignorant, not merely of history in the general sense, but of the history of philosophy itself. If our attitude towards philosophy is influenced by an admiration for the exact sciences, then the philosophy of the past is

something that has been superseded. It is punctuated by individual philosophers, some of whom had moments of understanding, but whose work as a whole comes to be regarded as quaint and primitive. For the philosophy of the present, from this point of view, is altogether better than that of the past, when science was in its infancy; and the philosophy of the future will proceed from the discoveries of our own age. It is true that the history of philosophy is now admitted as a branch of study in itself, and that there are specialists in this subject: but I suspect that in the opinion of a philosopher of the modern school, the historian of philosophy is rather an historian than a philosopher.

The root cause of the vagaries of modern philosophy — and perhaps, though I was unconscious of it, the reason for my dissatisfaction with philosophy as a *profession* — I now believe to lie in the divorce of philosophy from theology. It is very necessary to anticipate the resistance to such an affirmation: a resistance springing from an immediate emotional response, and expressed by saying that any dependence of philosophy upon theology would be a limitation of the freedom of thought of the philosopher. It is necessary to make clear what one means by the necessary relation between philosophy and theology, and the implication in philosophy of some religious faith. This I shall not attempt, because it is done very much better by Josef Pieper: I desire only to call attention to this central point in his thought. He is himself a Catholic philosopher, grounded on Plato, Aristotle and the scholastics: and he makes his position quite clear to his readers. But his writings do not constitute a Christian *apologetic* — that, in his view, is a task for the theologian. For him, a philosophy related to the theology of some other communion than that of Rome, or to that of some other religion then Christianity, would still be a genuine philosophy. It is significant that he pays a passing word of approval to the existentialism of Sartre, on the ground that he finds in it religious presuppositions — utterly different as they are from those which Dr. Pieper holds himself.

The establishment of a right relation between philosophy and theology, which will leave the philosopher quite autonomous in his own area, is I think one of the most important lines of investigation which Dr. Pieper has pursued. In a more general way, his influence should be in the direction of restoring philosophy to a place of importance for every educated person who thinks, instead of confining it to esoteric activities which can affect the public

only indirectly, insidiously and often in a distorted form. He restores to their position in philosophy what common sense obstinately tells us ought to be found there: *insight* and *wisdom*. By affirming the dependence of philosophy upon revelation, and a proper respect for 'the wisdom of the ancients', he puts the philosopher himself in a proper relation to other philosophers dead and living. Two dangers to philosophy are thus averted. One is the conscious or unconscious imitation of exact science, the assumption that philosophers should be organized as teams of workers, like scientists in their laboratories, investigating various parts of a problem which is conceived as soluble in the same way as a problem in physics. The opposite error is that of an older and more romantic attitude, which produced what I may call the 'one-man' philosophy: that is to say, a world view which was a projection of the personality of its author, a disguised imposition of his own temperament with all its emotional bias, upon the reader. I do not wish to diminish the grandeur or the value of the greatest one-man philosophies. When such a philosophy is done superbly well, as by Spinoza, it retains a permanent importance for humanity: for an acquaintance with Spinoza, and a temporary submission to his influence, is an experience of great value. On the other hand, the colossal and grotesque achievement of Hegel may continue in concealed or derivative forms to exercise a fascination upon many minds. I would mention also the work of such a writer as F. H. Bradley, which owes its persuasiveness to a masterly prose style. The charm of the author's personality stimulates an agreeable state of feeling: and such books will continue to be read as literature, for the enlargement of our experience through a contact with powerful and individual minds.

Dr. Pieper also has style: however difficult his thought may sometimes be, his sentences are admirably constructed, his ideas expressed with the maximum clarity. But his mind is submissive to what he believes to be the great, the main tradition of European thought; his originality is subdued and unostentatious. And as he is a philosopher who accepts explicitly a dogmatic theology, his presuppositions are in full view, instead of being, as with some philosophers who profess complete detachment, concealed from both author and reader. The attitude towards philosophy which he maintains, and which distinguishes him from most of our contemporaries, is enough to account for his preference for expression in brief and concentrated essays rather than in constructions of greater bulk. Of such essays he has already published an

impressive list: the two here presented are those which author, translator and publishers agreed upon as the most suitable introduction to his thought.

T. S. Eliot

INTRODUCTION by Roger Scruton

”Don’t just do something: stand there!” The command of an American President to a fussy official was one of those rare moments in American politics when truth prevailed over industry. Josef Pieper’s serene reflections on the art of being serene ought to be read by every practical person — and the more that person is involved in business, politics, and public life, the more useful will Pieper be to him. For here, in a succinct yet learned argument, are all the reasons for thinking that the frenzied need to work, to plan, and to change things is nothing but idleness under other names — moral, intellectual, and emotional idleness. In order to defend itself from self-knowledge, this agitated idleness is busy smashing all the mirrors in the house.

Leisure has had a bad press. For the puritan it is the source of vice; for the egalitarian a sign of privilege. The Marxist regards leisure as the unjust surplus, enjoyed by the few at the expense of the many. Nobody in a democracy is at ease with leisure, and almost every person, however little use he may have for his time, will say that he works hard for a living — curious expression, when the real thing to work for is dying.

The calumnies, however, do not apply: so argues Josef Pieper. We mistake leisure for idleness, and work for creativity. Of course, work *may* be creative. But only when informed by leisure. Work is the means of life; leisure the end. Without the end, work is meaningless — a means to a means to a means ... and so on forever, like Wall Street or Capitol Hill. Leisure is not the cessation of work, but work of another kind, work restored to its human meaning, as a celebration and a festival.

This is what religion teaches us, and the teaching is as important for the unbeliever as for the person of faith. We *win through* to leisure. ”At the end of all our striving” we rejoice in our being and offer thanks. It is then, eating a meal among those we love, dancing together at a wedding, sitting side by side with people silenced by music, that we recognize our peculiar sovereign position in the world.

Our failure to understand leisure, Pieper makes clear, is one with our failure to understand the difference between man and the other animals. Think only of meal-times — and on this subject Pieper writes with

uncommon perceptiveness. The meal, as Pieper puts it, has a ”spiritual or even a religious character”. That is to say, it is an offering, a sacrifice, and also — in the highest instance — a sacrament, something offered to us from on high, by the very Being to whom we offer it. Animals eat, but there is nothing in their lives to correspond to this experience of the ”meal”, as a celebration and endorsement of our life here on earth. When we sit down to eat, we are consciously removing ourselves from the world of work and means and industry, and facing outwards, to the kingdom of ends. Feast, festival, and faith lift us from idleness, and endow our lives with sense.

Pieper’s book is also a feast. With astonishing brevity, he extracts from the idea of leisure not only a theory of culture and its significance, not only a natural theology for our disenchanted times, but also a philosophy of philosophy — an account of what philosophy can do for us, and what it ought to do for us, in a world where science and technology have tried to usurp the divine command. And he reiterates that command as it came in a ”still small voice” to Elijah, and again to Pascal and Kierkegaard: in his own gentle way, Pieper tells us to ”Be still”.

Roger Scruton

Malmesbury, March 1998

The Roots of Culture

The Foreword to Josef Pieper's

Leisure: The Basis of Culture

Fr. James V. Schall, S. J.

When a culture is in the process of denying its own roots, it becomes most important to know what these roots are. We had best know what we reject before we reject it. If we are going to build a chair, the first thing we need to know, above all else, is what a chair is. Otherwise, we can do nothing. We are not a culture that never understood what a human being was in his nature and in his destiny.

Rather we are a culture that, having once known these things, has decided against living them or understanding them. Indeed, we have decided to reject most of them, almost as an act of defiance as an act of pure humanism as if what we are is not first given to us. We have let an empty future that we propose to make by our own standards become the ideal over and against a real past that revealed to us what man really was and is: namely, a being open to wonder who did not create himself or the world in which he dwells.

This little book by the German philosopher Josef Pieper is simply a gem. No book its size will teach us so many true things about everything we need to know to understand what and why we are or about how to live a life worth living. This book is one of the first I recommend for waking us up to what life is all about, to what is essential to and glorious about our lives. Pieper, through his writing, gives us the quiet assurance that he knows what is important. He has an uncanny command over the way to bring reality to our attention in a manner that makes it ours yet leaves it as it is.

This book contains two related essays that Pieper gave in Bonn in 1946. The first is on the classic notion of "leisure", what we "do" when all else politics, economics, daily duties is done. The second essay is on what it means to philosophize. Augustine said that there is "no other reason for men to philosophize but to be happy". Pieper would agree with this. The second essay is often overlooked, but it contains the profoundest insights about the nature of philosophy, its self-understanding, and its relation to theology.

Both essays belong together. Man has the power to know *all that is*. This is what his mind gives him. Yet he still knows himself as a finite being by knowing what is not himself. This is the importance of the philosophic life. It is for its own sake; yea, it is even "useless" because it is not for something else other than its own delight in knowing the truth. No short essay will teach the reader what his knowing powers are about better than Pieper's "Philosophic Act". Few have ever had such an act explained at all, let alone so well.

Originally, these essays were written with the background of World War II and its aftermath. Here, Pieper was already quite aware that the first principle of action is the end for which we act. If we get this source of action wrong, our efforts to achieve our end will go wrong. When read today, these essays now stand against the background not only of World War II and then of the decline of Marxism, but also of the absolutization of democracy and the resurrection of Islam. A world once thought to be automatically prosperous is suddenly thrown back on its essentials.

At first sight, it seems that something, almost anything, must be done about our situation. But it is the genius of Pieper to see that this activist, busy motion is the wrong starting point. Before we can pretend to do anything about the present, we must know what we are, what the world is, and yes, what God is. Construction of a civilization that knows little or nothing of these deeper realities can only make things worse.

In a world in which German writers are not always known as models of clarity, Josef Pieper writes with a concise, comprehensible style. In the briefest manner, his writings always show his familiarity with the great thinkers of our tradition. He does not always agree with them, but he always learns from both their mistakes and their insights. He tells what each is.

Pieper does not begin with modernity and the presumption that what the classics and medievals held made no difference. Indeed, knowing little or nothing before Machiavelli or Descartes is a formula for philosophical incoherence. In a surprising way, every book of Pieper's is a short treatise on the whole of philosophy and its history. In his writings, Pieper is a great teacher, even for the beginner. His audiences are those eager to find the truth,

indeed those eager to know that there is a truth. Pieper is the great antidote to philosophical skepticism and to sophistry in every form.

What is at issue in the word "leisure", a famous Greek word from which we get the word "school", is both an inner worldly and a transcendent understanding of the highest things. Following Aristotle, we realize that something "divine" lies in our knowing of *what is*. We are not simply to devote ourselves to politics and economics or to making a living, however valid these are in their own spheres. Pieper is quite aware of these things as elements in human life. But he recognizes that when everything human is defined in terms of utility or pleasure, the enterprise of knowing what we are loses its centrality in our lives. There are things beyond politics and without which politics cannot be politics.

Pieper is remarkably good in explaining to us that our minds are open to a reality that is not ourselves; in fact we stand in wonder and amazement at what is not ourselves. Much modern science has tried to tell us that there is nothing "out there" to find. All we do, it is said, is "project" ourselves. Pieper will have none of this blindness. He understands the shortcomings of an epistemology that would close us off from reality, including our own reality. More importantly, he makes us aware that we stand in a gift relation to what is not ourselves. What is closer to our existence is not the power we project out onto the world but the reality itself that it is a gift to us. About reality we wonder how we should be grateful and to whom.

Pieper's famous little book is a short philosophy course discovered by those fortunate few who read him, a book often found by chance. This book exists in a world that knows little of philosophy as it was originally understood as a love of wisdom, a love of *what is*. None of us are gods who presumably are already wise: we are but men who wonder, who seek to know for no other reason than the knowing itself.

Pieper is amazing in the way that he finds brief, pithy statements about his point from Aquinas, Plato, Goethe, Aristotle, and others. From *Disputed Questions on the Virtues* by Aquinas, Pieper is fond of citing this passage: *Homo non proprie humanus, sed superhumanus est.* (Properly speaking, man is not simply human, but superhuman.) Pieper understands that this reality of

man's actual being impinges on our lives and thought in such a way that, by being what we are, we become both better philosophers and better human beings.

Leisure: The Basis of Culture and *The Philosophical Act* are together very brief. Together they cannot be matched as an introduction and explication of what we are. They teach us the two greatest things about ourselves: that we did not cause ourselves to be and that we cannot but be amazed and grateful that what we are actually exists in our own persons and in the companions we find in this mortal life, itself destined not just to itself but to eternal life. Other books may also teach us this, but no book will do it quite so well.

James V. Schall, S.J.
Department of Government
Georgetown University
Lent, 2009

Author's Preface to the English Edition

These two essays were published separately in Germany, the second having been originally written in the form of lectures, given in Bonn in the summer of 1947. They are intimately connected and properly belong together. This is not only true in the sense that they were both written in the same summer, in a single breath, so to say; they both spring from the same thought.

Their common origin or foundation might be stated in the following words: Culture depends for its very existence on leisure, and leisure, in its turn, is not possible unless it has a durable and consequently living link with the *cultus* with divine worship.

The word 'cult' in English is used exclusively, or almost exclusively, in a derivative sense. But here it is used, along with worship, in its primary sense. It means something else than, and something more than, religion. It really means fulfilling the ritual of public sacrifice. That is a notion which contemporary 'modern' man associates almost exclusively and unconsciously with uncivilized, primitive peoples and with classical antiquity. For that very reason it is of the first importance to see that the *cultus*, now as in the distant past, is the primary source of man's freedom, independence and immunity within society. Suppress that last sphere of freedom, and freedom itself, and all our liberties, will in the end vanish into thin air.

Culture, in the sense in which it is used above, is the quintessence of all the natural goods of the world and of those gifts and qualities which, while belonging to man, lie beyond the immediate sphere of his needs and wants. All that is good in this sense, all man's gifts and faculties are not necessarily useful in a practical way; though there is no denying that they belong to a truly human life, not strictly speaking necessary, even though he could not do without them.

Among the *bona non utilia sed honesta* which are at home in the realm of freedom, in its innermost circle indeed, is philosophy, the philosophical act, which must be understood in the traditional sense of Plato, Aristotle, Augustine and Aquinas, and as they understood it. Grant this original sense of the word 'philosophizing' to be the true one, and it is no longer possible to speak of the philosophical aspect in the same way that one might speak of a

sociological and historical or a political aspect as though one could take up the one or the other at will. In the tradition of which I am speaking, the philosophical act is a fundamental relation to reality, a full, personal attitude which is by no manner of means at the sole disposal of the *ratio*; it is an attitude which presupposes silence, a contemplative attention to things, in which man begins to see how worthy of veneration they really are. And it is perhaps only in this way that it is possible to understand how it was that Plato's philosophical school, the Academy in Athens, was at the same time a sort of club or society for the celebration of the cultus. In the last resort pure theory, philosophical *theoria*, entirely free from practical considerations and interference — and that is what theory is — can only be preserved and realized within the sphere of leisure, and leisure, in its turn, is free because of its relation to worship, to the *cultus*.

Josef Pieper,
1952

ANALYTICAL ToC

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Part I
Leisure, the Basis of Culture

But the Gods, taking pity on human beings a race born to labor - gave them regularly recurring divine festivals, as a means of refreshment from their fatigue; they gave them the Muses, and Apollo and Dionysus as the leaders of the Muses, to the end that, after refreshing themselves in the company of the Gods, they might return to an upright posture.

- Plato

Be at leisure - and know that I am God.

- Psalm 45

I

We can begin, like the Scholastic masters, with an objection: *videtur qued non* ... "It seems *not* to be true that ..." And this is the objection: a time like the present [i.e., a few years after the Second World War, in Germany] seems, of all times, *not* to be a time to speak of "leisure". We are engaged in the re-building of a house, and our hands are full. Shouldn't all our efforts be directed to nothing other than the completion of that house?

This is no small objection. But there is also a good answer to it. To "build our house" at this time implies not only securing survival, but also putting in order again our entire moral and intellectual heritage. And before any detailed plan along these lines can succeed, our new beginning, our re-foundation, calls out immediately for ... a defense of leisure.

For, when we consider the foundations of Western European culture (is it, perhaps, too rash to assume that our re-building will in fact be carried out in a "Western" spirit? Indeed, this and no other is the very assumption that is at issue today.), one of these foundations is leisure. We can read it in the first chapter of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. And the very history of the meaning of the word bears a similar message. The Greek word for leisure (*σχολή*) is the origin of Latin *scola*, German *Schule*, English *school*. The name for the institutions of education and learning means *"leisure"*.

Of course, the original meaning of the concept of "leisure" has practically been forgotten in today's leisure–less culture of "total work": in order to win our way to a real understanding of leisure, we must confront the contradiction that rises from our overemphasis on the world of work. "One does not only work in order to live, but one lives for the sake of one's work," this statement, quoted by Max Weber[1], makes immediate sense to us, and appeals to current opinion. It is difficult for us to see how in fact it turns the order of things upside-down.

And what would be our response to another statement? "We work in order to be at leisure." Would we hesitate to say that here the world is really turned upside-down? Doesn't this statement appear almost *immoral* to the man and woman of the world of "total work"? Is it not an attack on the basic principles of human society? Now, I have not merely constructed a sentence

to prove a point. The statement was actually made – by Aristotle[2]. Yes, Aristotle: the sober, industrious realist, and the fact that *he* said it, gives the statement special significance. What he says in a more literal translation would be: "We are *not–at–leisure* in order to *be–at–leisure*." For the Greeks, "not–leisure" was the word for the world of everyday work; and not only to indicate its "hustle and bustle," but the work itself. The Greek language had only this negative term for it (ἀ–*σχολία*), as did Latin (*neg-otium*, "not–leisure").

The context not only of this sentence but also of another one from Aristotle's *Politics* (stating that the "pivot" around which everything turns is leisure[3]) shows that these notions were not considered extraordinary, but only self-evident: the Greeks would probably not have understood our maxims about "work for the sake of work". Could this also imply that people in our day no longer have direct access to the original meaning of leisure?

Of course, we can expect an objection here too: how seriously must we take Aristotle anyway? We can admire the ancient writers, of course, but that doesn't mean we are obliged to follow them.

On the other side, consider the following: the Christian concept of the "contemplative life" (the *vita contemplativa*) was built on the Aristotelian concept of leisure. Further, the distinction between the "Liberal Arts" and the "Servile Arts" has its origin precisely here. But is not such a distinction of interest only to the historian? Well, at least one side of the distinction comes to the fore in everyday life, when the issue of "servile work" arises, the kind of activity that is deemed inappropriate for the "holy rest" of the Sabbath, Sundays, or Holidays. How many are aware that the expression "servile work" can not be fully understood without contrasting it with the "Liberal Arts"? And what does it mean to say that some arts are "liberal" or "free"? This is still in need of clarification.

This example might suffice, if we wanted to show, at least, that Aristotle's words do have some relevance to our times. And yet this is still not enough to "oblige" us in any way.

The real reason for mentioning it was to show how sharply the modern valuation of work and leisure differs from that of Antiquity and the Middle Ages. The difference is so great, in fact, that we can no longer understand

with any immediacy just what the ancient and medieval mind understood by the statement, ”We are *not–at–leisure* in order to *be–at–leisure*.”

Now, the very fact of this difference, of our inability to recover the original meaning of ”leisure,” will strike us all the more when we realize how extensively the opposing idea of ”work” has invaded and taken over the whole realm of human action and of human existence as a whole; when we realize, as well, how ready we are to grant all claims made for the person who ”works.”

In the following discussion, the word ”worker” will not be used in the sense of a distinct kind of occupation, with the sociological and statistical sense of the ”proletarian worker,” although the ambiguity is not coincidental. ”Worker” will be used in an anthropological sense: as a general human ideal. It is with this meaning in mind that Ernst Niekisch[4] spoke of the ”worker” as an ”imperial figure,” and Ernst Jünger[5] sketched a portrait of that ”worker”-type which has already begun to determine the future of humanity.

An altered conception of the human being *as such*, and a new interpretation of the meaning of human existence *as such*, looms behind the new claims being made for ”work” and the ”worker.” And as we might expect, the historical evolution which resulted in this changed conception is difficult to follow, and almost impossible to recover in detail. If something of real import is going to be said on the matter, it will be achieved not by reconstructing a historical narrative, but by digging more deeply to the very roots of a philosophical and theological understanding of the human person.

II

”Intellectual work,” ”intellectual worker” – these terms characterize the latest stretch of the road we have traveled, bringing us at last to the modern ideal of work in its most extreme formulation.

Up until this time (at least from the point of view of someone who worked with his hands) the province of intellectual enterprise tended to be looked upon as a kind of paradise, where nobody needed to work; at the heart of this privileged province lay ”philosophy,” something at furthest remove from the working world.

Now, the takeover of this region of intellectual action (including the province of philosophical culture) and its exclusive possession by the realm of ”total work,” forms only the most recent phase of a whole series of conquests made by the ”imperial figure” of the ”Worker.” And the concepts *intellectual worker* and *intellectual work* (with the evaluative claims that go with them) make the fact of that conquest especially clear and especially challenging to our times.

In this last part of the journey, however, the significance of the whole historical process has gathered itself together to form an expression of utmost precision and clarity. For, in fully explicating the inner structure of the concept ”intellectual work,” we come face to face with the ”world of total work” and its real meaning.

The concept of intellectual work has a number of historical antecedents, which can serve to clarify it.

First, it is based on a certain interpretation of the human knowing process.

What happens when our eye sees a rose? What do we *do* when that happens? Our mind does something, to be sure, in the mere fact of taking in the object, grasping its color, its shape, and so on. We have to be awake and active. But all the same, it is a ”relaxed” looking, so long as we are merely looking at it and not *observing* or *studying* it, counting or measuring its various features. Such observation would *not* be a ”relaxed” action: it would be what Ernst Jünger termed an ”act of aggression.”[6] But simply looking at something, gazing at it, ”taking it in,” is merely to open our eyes to receive

the things that present themselves to us, that come to us without any need for "effort" on our part to "possess" them.

There would scarcely be any dispute about this, if we were speaking about an act of sense perception.

But what about an act of knowing? When a human being considers something imperceptible to the senses, is there then such a thing as mere "looking"? Or, to use the scholastic technical terminology, is there such a thing as "intellectual vision"?

The ancient and medieval philosophers answered, "Yes." Modern philosophers have tended to say, "No."

To Kant, for instance, the human act of knowing is exclusively "discursive," which means *not* "merely looking." "The understanding cannot look upon anything."[7] This doctrine has been characterized, in brief, as "one of the most momentous dogmatic assumptions of Kantian epistemology."[8] In Kant's view, then, human knowing consists essentially in the act of investigating, articulating, joining, comparing, distinguishing, abstracting, deducing, proving – all of which are so many types and methods of active mental effort. According to Kant, knowing — (*intellectual* knowing, that is, by the human being) is *activity*, and nothing but activity.

It is no wonder that, starting from this basis, Kant was able to conclude that all knowing, even philosophy itself (since philosophy is at the greatest remove from sense perception), should be understood as a form of *work*.

And he said so expressly: in 1796, for example, in an article written to refute the Romantic "vision" and "intuitive" philosophy of Jacobi, Schlosser, and Stolberg[9]. In philosophy, Kant objects, "the law of reason is supreme, whereby property is possessed through labor." And this Romantic philosophy cannot truly be a philosophy because it is not "work." This accusation he directs even against Plato, that "Father of all raving enthusiasm in Philosophy," while, Kant says with recognition and approval, "Aristotle's philosophy is truly work." From such a perspective, originating from the exaltation of a "philosophy of work," the "recently exalted, privileged tone of Philosophy" is branded as a false philosophy, in which one "does not work but merely listens with delight to the oracle within oneself, in order to come into complete possession of the whole wisdom promised by philosophy." And

such a ”pseudo–philosophy” thinks itself superior to the strenuous labor of the true philosopher!

Now, ancient and medieval philosophy had quite the opposite view, without, of course, justifying any charge that philosophy was something ”easy.” Not only the Greeks in general – Aristotle no less than Plato – but the great medieval thinkers as well, all held that there was an element of purely receptive ”looking,” not only in sense perception but also in intellectual knowing or, as Heraclitus said, *”Listening-in to the being of things.”*[10]

The medievals distinguished between the intellect as *ratio* and the intellect as *intellectus*. *Ratio* is the power of discursive thought, of searching and re-searching, abstracting, refining, and concluding [*cf*. Latin *dis-currere*, ”to run to and fro”], whereas *intellectus* refers to the ability of ”simply looking” (*simplex intuitus*), to which the truth presents itself as a landscape presents itself to the eye. The spiritual knowing power of the human mind, as the ancients understood it, is really two things in one: *ratio* and *intellectus*, all knowing involves both. The path of discursive reasoning is accompanied and penetrated by the *intellectus'* untiring vision, which is not active but passive, or better, *receptive* – a receptively operating power of the intellect.

And something else must be added: the ancients likewise considered the active efforts of the discursive *ratio* to be the essentially human element of human knowing; *ratio* as the decisively human activity was contrasted with the *intellectus*, which had to do with what surpasses human limits. Of course, this ”super-human” power nevertheless does belong to man, and what is ”essentially human” alone does not exhaust the knowing power of human nature; for it is essential to the human person to reach beyond the province of the human and into the or der of angels, the truly intellectual beings.

”Although human knowing really takes place in the mode of *ratio*, nevertheless it is a kind of participation in that simple knowing which takes place in higher natures, and we can thus conclude that human beings possess a power of intellectual vision.” These are the words of Thomas Aquinas, *Disputed Questions on Truth*.[11] This statement means that human knowing is a partaking in the nondiscursive power of vision enjoyed by the angels, to whom it has been granted to ”take in” the immaterial as easily as our eyes take in light or our ears sound. Human knowing has an element of the non-active, purely receptive seeing, which is not there in virtue of our humanity as

such, but in virtue of a transcendence over what is human, but which is really the highest fulfillment of what it is to be human, and is thus ”truly human” after all (in the same way, again according to Thomas Aquinas, the *vita contemplativa* as the highest form of human living is not ”properly human, but superhuman”: *non proprie humana, sed superhumana*).[12]

For the ancient and medieval philosophers the ”laboring” nature of the human *ratio* was likewise a mark of its humanness. The operation of the *ratio*, its discursive thinking process, really is work, and a difficult activity.

But the simple act of the *intellectus* is not work. And whoever thinks, along with the ancients, that human knowing is a mutual interplay of *ratio* and *intellectus*; whoever can recognize an element of intellectual vision within discursive reasoning; whoever, finally, can retain in philosophy an element of contemplation of being as a whole – such a person will have to grant that a characterization of knowing and philosophy as ”work” is not only not exhaustive, but does not even reach the core of the matter, and that something essential is in fact missing from such a definition. Certainly, knowing in general and philosophical knowing in particular cannot take place without the effort and activity of discursive reasoning, without the ”nuisance of labor” (*labor improbus*) involved in all ”intellectual work.” Even so, there is something else in it, and something essential to it, that is *not* work.

The statement, ”knowing is work,” or ”knowing is an activity,” is a statement with two sides to it. It implies a demand on the human being, and a demand *made* by the human being. If you want to understand something, you have to work; in philosophy, Kant’s ”Law of the Human Reason,” that property is acquired through labor,[13] holds true – and that is a claim *on* man.

The other, hidden, side of the same dictum – the side that does not immediately show itself – is the claim *made by* man: if knowing is work, exclusively work, then the one who knows, knows only the fruit of his own, subjective activity, and nothing else. There is nothing in his knowing that is not the fruit of his own efforts; there is nothing ”received” in it.

To sum up the argument: thanks to a certain underlying assumption, the concept of ”intellectual work” has gained a great deal of influence – the assumption that human knowing is accomplished in an exclusively active/discursive operation of the *ratio*.

And when we look into the face of the ”worker,” it is the traits of ”effort” and ”stress” that we see becoming more pronounced there and, so to speak, permanently etched. It is the mark of ”absolute activity” (which Goethe said ”makes one bankrupt, in the end”[14]); the hard quality of *not–being–able–to–receive*; a stoniness of heart, that will not brook any resistance – as expressed once, most radically, in the following terrifying statement: ”Every action makes sense, even criminal acts ... all passivity is senseless.”[15]

But it is simply not the case that ”discursive thinking” and ”intellective vision” are as exclusively opposed to one another as ”activity” to ”receptivity,” or as active effort to receptive absorption. Rather, they are related to each other as effort and struggle, on the one hand, are related to effortlessness and calm possession, on the other.

From the contrast just mentioned – between effort and effortlessness – appears a *second* source of emphasis on the concept ”intellectual work.” We speak here of a peculiar criterion for determining the value of action as such. When Kant spoke of philosophy as a ”Herculean labor,”[16] he was only using a convenient figure of speech. For, in this laborious aspect, he saw a kind of legitimation of philosophy: philosophy is genuine, *insofar* as it is a ”Herculean labor.” The fact that ”intellective vision” didn’t *cost anything* is what made it so suspicious to him. Kant expected no real gain in knowledge from intellectual vision, *because* it is the very nature of vision to be effortless.

Would not such a viewpoint bring us to the conclusion, or at least, close to the conclusion, that the truth of what is known is determined by the *effort* put into knowing it?

Now, this is not so very distant from the ethical doctrine that holds that whatever someone does by inclination – and that means, without effort – is a betrayal of true morality. Indeed, according to Kant, the moral law by definition is opposed to natural inclination. It is simply part of the nature of things that the Good is difficult and that the voluntary effort put into forcing oneself to do something becomes the standard for moral goodness. The more difficult thing must be the higher Good. Schiller’s ironic verses point out the problem:

I help my friends, and it feels nice

Until I fear that it’s a vice.[17]

So, effort is good. This was a thought formulated long ago by the Cynic philosopher Antisthenes[18], one of Plato's friends and a fellow disciple of Socrates. Antisthenes, by the way, was a surprisingly "modern" figure. He was responsible for the first paradigm of the "worker" – or rather, he represented it himself. He not only came up with the equation of effort with goodness, he also extolled Hercules as the Accomplisher of Superhuman Actions.[19] Now, this is an image that still (or, once more?) has a certain compelling attraction: from the motto of Erasmus[20] to the philosophy of Kant, who used the word "Herculean" to praise the heroism of philosophers, and on to Thomas Carlyle, the prophet of the religion of Work: "You must labor like Hercules ..."[21] As an ethicist of independence, this Antisthenes had no feeling for cultic celebration, which he preferred attacking with "enlightened" wit;[22] he was "a-musical" (a foe of the Muses: poetry only interested him for its moral content);[23] he felt no responsiveness to Eros (he said he "would like to kill Aphrodite");[24] as a flat Realist, he had no belief in immortality (what really matters, he said, was to live rightly "on this earth").[25] This collection of character traits appear almost purposely designed to illustrate the very "type" of the modern "workaholic."

"Effort is good": objecting to this thesis in the *Summa theologiae*, Thomas Aquinas wrote as follows: "The essence of virtue consists more in the Good than in the Difficult."[26] "When something is more difficult, it is not for that reason necessarily more worthwhile, but it must be more difficult in such a way, as also to be at a higher level of goodness."[27] The Middle Ages had something to say about virtue that will be hard for us, fellow countrymen of Kant, to understand. And what was this? That virtue makes it possible for us ... to master our natural inclinations? No. *That* is what Kant would have said, and we all might be ready to agree. What Thomas says, instead, is that virtue perfects us so that we can *follow* our natural inclination in the right way.[28] Yes, the highest realizations of moral goodness are known to be such precisely in this: that they take place *effortlessly* because it is of their essence to arise from love. And yet the overemphasis on effort and struggle has made an inroad even on our understanding of love. Why, for instance, in the

opinion of the average Christian, is the love of one's enemies the highest form of love? Because here, the natural inclination is suppressed to a heroic degree. What makes this kind of love so great is precisely its unusual difficulty, its practical impossibility. But what does Thomas say? "It is not the difficulty involved that makes this kind of love so worthy, even though the greatness of the love is shown by its power to overcome the difficulty. But if the love were so great, as completely to remove all difficulty *that* would be a still greater love."[29]

It would follow, then, that the essence of knowing would lie, not in the effort of thought as such, but in the grasp of the being of things, in the discovery of reality.

Just as in the realm of the Good, the greatest virtue is *without* difficulty, so in knowing, the highest form would be the lightening-like insight, true contemplation, which comes to one like a gift; it is effortless and not burdensome. Thomas speaks of *contemplation* and *play* in a single breath: "Because of the leisure of contemplation" [*otium contemplationis*] the Scripture says of the Divine Wisdom itself that it "plays all the time, plays throughout the world" [*Wisdom* 8, 30].[30]

Surely, such highest realizations of knowing would be preceded by an exceptional effort of thought, and perhaps *must* be so prepared (otherwise, such knowledge would be grace in the strict sense); but in any case, the effort would not be the cause but rather a necessary condition for it. And the holy effortlessness of the action of charity would also be connected with previous, and heroic, exercise of the will. "Knowing" means that the reality of existing things has been reached; it does not consist in the effort of thought, or "intellectual work."

This aspect too of the concept of "intellectual work" – the overvaluation of the "difficult" as such – presents itself in the deeply etched visage of the "worker": those mask-like, stony features, ready to suffer pain, no matter what the reason. The *un-related nature* of this readiness to suffer is the decisive difference because in this case someone does not ask why. Such readiness to suffer (in which the ultimate meaning of all "discipline" has been seen to consist)[31] is radically different from the Christian understanding of self–sacrifice: in the latter, one does not intend the painful as such, nor seeks

exertion for the sake of exertion, nor the difficult simply because it is difficult; rather, what one seeks is a higher bliss, a healing, and the fullness of existence, and thereby the fullness of happiness: ”The goal and the norm of discipline is happiness.”[32]

The innermost meaning of this over-emphasis on effort appears to be this: that man mistrusts everything that is without effort; that in good conscience he can own only what he himself has reached through painful effort; that he refuses to let himself be given anything.

We should consider for a moment how much the Christian understanding of life is based on the reality of ”Grace”; let us also recall that the Holy Spirit Himself is called ”Gift”;[33] that the greatest Christian teachers have said that the Justice of God is based on Love;[34] that something given, something free of all debt, something undeserved, something not-achieved – is presumed in every thing achieved or laid claim to; that what is first is always something received – if we keep all this before our eyes, we can see the abyss that separates this other attitude from the inheritance of Christian Europe.

We have been inquiring into the origin of the concept of intellectual labor, and we have found that the concept has its origin above all in two theses: 1) the view that all human knowing is accomplished exclusively in the manner of discursive activity; and 2) the view that the effort that goes into thought is the criterion of its truth. But there is a third element involved as well, which appears to be even more crucial than the first two and seems to comprehend both of them within itself. This is the social doctrine that lies concealed in the concepts of ”intellectual labor” and ”intellectual worker.”

Understood in this way, work means ”contribution to society.” And ”intellectual work” is intellectual activity as social service, as contribution to the common utility. But that is not all that the terms ”intellectual work” and ”intellectual worker” say. The contemporary use of the words includes as well a reference to the ”working class,” and something like the following is implied: not only the wage earner, the hand-worker, and the proletarian are workers; even the learned man, the student, are workers; they too are drawn into the social system and its distribution of labor. The intellectual worker is also bound to his function; he too is a functionary in the total world of work, he may be called a ”specialist,” he is still a functionary. And something else,

something even more pointed is being said: nobody whether he be ”intellectual” or ”hand” worker – nobody is granted a ”free zone” of intellectual activity, ”free” meaning *not* being subordinated to a duty to fulfill some function. With this, our inquiry meets the very nub of the issue. Is it not clear to everyone how much the problem has gone beyond the merely theoretical stage, to threaten drastic implications?

And yet the ”social” – by which we understand the relationships of social classes and groupings with one an other – the ”social” is only the foreground, and we will have more to say about it later.

The real question, however, is a metaphysical one. It is the old question about the justification and sense of the *artes liberales*. What are ”liberal arts”? Thomas Aquinas provides some conceptual clarification in his *Commentary on Aristotle's Metaphysics*: ”Every art is called *liberal* which is ordered to knowing; those which are ordered to some utility to be attained through action are called *servile* arts.”[35] Six hundred years later, John Henry Newman said as follows: ”I know well,” Newman says, ”that knowledge may resolve itself into an art, and seminate in a mechanical process and in tangible fruit; but it may also fall back upon that Reason which informs it, and resolve itself into Philosophy. For in one case it is called Useful Knowledge; in the other, Liberal.”[36]

”Liberal arts,” therefore, are ways of human action which have their justification in themselves; ”servile arts” are ways of human action that have a purpose outside of themselves, a purpose, to be more exact, which consists in a useful effect that can be realized through *praxis*. The ”liberality” or ”freedom” of the liberal arts consists in their not being disposable for purposes, that they do not need to be legitimated by a social function, by being ”work.”

To many people, the question about the justification and meaning of the liberal arts will seem to be an already answered question, an issue now put behind us. To translate the question into contemporary language, it would sound something like this: Is there still an area of human action, or human existence as such, that does not have its justification by being part of the machinery of a ”five-year plan”? Is there or is there not something of that kind?

The inner tendency of the concepts ”intellectual work” and ”intellectual worker” point to the answer: No, the human being is essentially, and with his whole existence, a functionary, even in the most noble forms of his activity.

We can relate the question to philosophy and philosophical education. Philosophy can be called the most liberal of the liberal arts. ”Knowledge is most truly free when it is philosophical knowledge,” Newman said.[37] And philosophy, in a certain sense, gave its name to the liberal arts, for the ”Arts Faculty” of the medieval university is today [in Germany] called the ”Philosophical Faculty.”

For our inquiry, then, philosophy, and how it is valued, becomes an indicator of particular importance.

For there is not much to dispute about whether, or to what extent, the natural sciences, medical science, jurisprudence, or economics should have a circumscribed place for themselves in the functioning unity of the modern social system, and thus be capable of being classed as ”work” in social-scientific usage. It is of the nature of the individual sciences to be related to purposes that exist apart from themselves. But there is also a philosophical manner of treating these special sciences, and then our question about philosophy as such would apply to them also. ”The theoretically treated special science” – that means that a science is being pursued in the original, ”academic” sense – (for ”academic” means ”philosophical” or it means nothing!).

Thus, if we are speaking about the place and justification for philosophy, then at the same time, we are speaking, no more and no less, about the place and justification for the University, for academic education, and for education [*Bildung*] in the genuine sense – in the sense in which it differs from and transcends, in principle, all mere career training.

The functionary is trained. Training is distinguished by its orientation toward something partial, and specialized, in the human being, and toward some one section of the world. Education is concerned with the whole: who ever is educated knows how the world as a whole behaves. Education concerns the whole human being, insofar as he is *capax universi*, ”capable of the whole,” able to comprehend the sum total of existing things.

But this is not to say anything against professional training, or against the functionary. Of course, the vocationally specialized exercise of a function is

the normal form of human activity; what is normal is work, and the normal day is a working day. But the question is this: can the world of man be exhausted in being the "working world"? Can the human being be satisfied with being a functionary, a "worker"? Can human existence be fulfilled in being exclusively a work-a-day existence? Or, to put it another way, from the other direction, as it were: Are there such things as liberal arts? The architects of the total world of work would have to answer, "No." In the world of the worker, as Ernst Jünger put it, there is a denial of free research.[38] In the consistently planned working-state there can be neither genuine philosophy (to whose nature it belongs, not to be at the disposal of purposes, and in this sense "free"), nor can the special sciences be treated in a philosophical manner (and that means, "academically" in the original sense of the word).

Now it is in the term "intellectual worker," above all, that this very situation is established and proclaimed. It is thus symptomatic, and painfully so, that linguistic usage, and especially academic usage, has been so influenced by all this talk of "intellectual worker" or "mental laborer."

But the ancients said that there rightly exist non-useful forms of human activity, that there are such things as liberal arts. There are not only functionary sciences, there is also the knowledge of a "gentleman," as J. H. Newman so happily translated the old term *artes liberales* in his *Idea of a University*?[39]

It should go without saying that not everything that cannot exactly be categorized as "useful" is useless. And thus it is not at all without significance for a people and the realization of a nation's common good that room be allowed, and respect be granted, for what is not "useful work" in the sense of immediate application. As Goethe the Minister of State wrote to Friedrich Soret [Oct. 20, 1830]: "I have never asked... how do I use the whole? – rather, I have only attempted to speak out what I understood as good and true. Of course, this was made use of... in a wider circle, but that was not its purpose, only a necessary result."[40]

According to Hegel's fine formulation, there is not only use, there is also blessing?[41]

In just such a sense can the medieval statement be understood, that it is ”necessary for the perfection of the human community, that there be persons who devote themselves to the [useless] life of contemplation.”[42] To which I would only like to add that this is necessary not only for the perfection of the individuals themselves, who devote themselves to the *vita contemplativa*, but also for the perfection of the whole human community! Would anyone who thinks only in terms of the ”intellectual worker” be willing to say that?

III

Our brief sketch of the "Worker" type has brought into the open three principal characteristics: an outwardly directed, active power; an aimless readiness to suffer pain; an untiring insertion into the rationalized program of useful social organization. From the perspective of such a "worker," leisure can only appear as something totally unforeseen, something completely alien, without rhyme or reason as a synonym, in fact, for idleness and laziness.

Now the code of life of the High Middle Ages said something entirely opposite to this: that it was precisely lack of leisure, an inability to be at leisure, that went together with idleness; that the restlessness of work-for-work's-sake arose from nothing other than idleness. There is a curious connection in the fact that the restlessness of a self-destructive work-fanaticism should take its rise from the absence of a will to accomplish something. This is a very surprising concept, which requires no small effort to explicate. But it is worth the trouble to spend a little time with the topic. What did the old code of conduct mean by idleness, by *acedia*?[43]

To begin with, it meant something other than what we usually mean, when we speak of the "root of all evils." Idleness, for the older code of behavior, meant especially this: that the human being had given up on the very responsibility that comes with his dignity: that he does not want to be what God wants him to be, and that means that he does not want to be what he really, and in the ultimate sense, *is*. *Acedia* is the "despair of weakness," of which Kierkegaard said that it consists in someone "despairingly" not wanting "to be oneself."[44] The metaphysical/theological concept of idleness means, then, that man finally does not agree with his own existence; that behind all his energetic activity, he is not at one with himself; that, as the Middle Ages expressed it, sadness has seized him in the face of the divine Goodness that lives within him – and this sadness is that "sadness of the world" (*tristitia saeculi*) spoken of in the Bible.[45]

What, then, would be the concept that opposes this metaphysical/theological concept of idleness? Is it that acquisitive effort or industriousness, as practiced in the economic life of civil society?

To be sure, this is how *acedia* has been understood by some, as if it had something to do with the "business-ethos" of the Middle Ages. Sombart, for example, interprets it to mean the "lackadaisical stay-at-home," in contrast with the active and useful worker;[46] but Max Scheler has already objected to this interpretation.[47] But in the wake of Sombart *acedia* has been translated by expressions like "wool gatherer" or "thumb-twiddler" [*Leimsierderhaftigkeit*], which can only really imply that *acedia* is the lack of economic ambition or enterprise.[48] But especially to be regretted is the apologetic enthusiasm of the attempt to legitimize "Christian teaching" through making it agree with the current fashion and, in this connection, to read modern activism into the "working-ethos" of the Church. This leads to a curious translation of this rather calm statement by Thomas Aquinas: *vivere secundum actum est quando exercet quis opera vitae in actu*[49] as "to live *in actu* means that one exerts oneself, is creative, and active"[50] – as if contemplation were not also an "activity of life (*opus vitae*)" for Thomas!

The opposite of *acedia* is not the industrious spirit of the daily effort to make a living, but rather the cheerful affirmation by man of his own existence, of the world as a whole, and of God – of Love, that is, from which arises that special freshness of action, which would never be confused, by anyone with any experience, with the narrow activity of the "workaholic."

We would probably get this all wrong, if we hadn't been expressly told: Thomas Aquinas understood *acedia* as a sin against the Third Commandment. So far from seeing in "idleness" the opposite of the "work-ethic," he understands it as a sin against the Sabbath, against "The soul's resting in God."[51]

And so, someone may ask, what has all this to do with our present topic? Only this: that *acedia* is classified as one of the "Seven Capital Sins." But the translation of the Latin terminology here is not exactly felicitous. *Caput* from which the word "capital" is derived, can mean "head" as in "head or source of a stream": these are the sins from which, as from a source arise, as it were, naturally, all other errors. And from Idleness – this is what brings us back to our own point of departure – from idleness springs, so the old teaching goes, among other vices, also those of Restlessness and Inability–for–Leisure (and

among the other ”daughters” springing from the same source, is *Despair*, giving us a certain insight into the hidden meaning of the expression, ”work and don’t despair!” since Restlessness and Despair are ”sisters”).

Idleness in the old sense, then, has so little in common with leisure, that it is the very inner disposition to non–leisure, that it is really ”lack of leisure.” There can only be leisure, when man is at one with himself, when he is in accord with his own being. *Acedia*, therefore, is ”disagreement with oneself.” Idleness and lack of leisure be long with each other; leisure is opposed to *both*.

Leisure, then, as a condition of the soul – (and we must firmly keep to this assumption, since leisure is not necessarily present in all the external things like ”breaks,” ”time off,” ”weekend,” ”vacation,” and so on – it is a condition of the soul) – leisure is precisely the counterpoise to the image of the ”worker,” and we can now see how this pertains to all three aspects we have dealt with: work as activity, work as effort, work as social function.

Against the exclusiveness of the paradigm of work as *activity*, first of all, there is leisure as ”non–activity” – an inner absence of preoccupation, a calm, an ability to let things go, to be quiet.

Leisure is a form of that stillness that is the necessary preparation for accepting reality; only the person who is still can hear, and whoever is not still, cannot hear. Such stillness as this is not mere soundlessness or a dead muteness; it means, rather, that the soul’s power, as real, of responding to the real – a *co*–respondence, eternally established in nature – has not yet descended into words. Leisure is the disposition of receptive understanding, of contemplative beholding, and immersion – in the real.

In leisure, there is, furthermore, something of the serenity of ”not–being–able–to–grasp,” of the recognition of the mysterious character of the world, and the confidence of blind faith, which can let things go as they will; there is in it something of the ”trust in the fragmentary, that forms the very life and essence of history.”[52] The same journal entry of the poet Konrad Weiss, from which that last quotation was taken, speaks of Ernst Jünger’s precise style of thinking and writing, which, with its ”fanaticism for the True and the Official,” pursues things as an act of aggression, to steal their secret from them and then to place them under inspection as if they were antiseptically prepared microscope slides – this is what Weiss observed: such ”formulated”

description is ”the very opposite of all contemplation, and is like an idleness pushed to a sublime level of exactitude ... as distinct from the typical idleness, which gives its time to everything: God, things, the world, everything, whether good or evil – letting everything go by in indifference.”

Leisure is not the attitude of the one who intervenes but of the one who opens himself; not of someone who seizes but of one who lets go, who lets *himself* go, and ”go under,” almost as someone who falls asleep must let him self go (you cannot sleep, unless you do so). And in fact, just as sleeplessness and restlessness are in a special way mutually related, just so the man at leisure is related to someone sleeping; as Heraclitus said of those who sleep, that they ”are active and cooperative in the business of the world.”[53] The surge of new life that flows out to us when we give ourselves to the contemplation of a blossoming rose, a sleeping child, or of a divine mystery – is this not like the surge of life that comes from deep, dreamless sleep? And as it is written in the Book of Job: ”God gives us songs in the middle of the night” (35, 10), and as wise people know, God gives His blessings to his own, and what rejoices them, in sleep – in just the same way, do the greatest, most blessed insights, the kind that could never be tracked down, come to us above all in the time of leisure. In such silent openness of the soul, it may be granted to man for only an instant to know ”what the world /holds in its innermost,” so that afterwards the insights of that happy moment have to be re-discovered through the effort of ”labor.”

Second, against the exclusiveness of the paradigm of work as effort, leisure is the condition of considering things in a celebrating spirit. The inner joyfulness of the person who is celebrating [*Der Feiernde*] belongs to the very core of what we mean by leisure [as does that incomparable German word for ”quitting time” or ”festival-evening,” *Feierabend*]. Leisure is only possible in the assumption that man is not only in harmony with himself [whereas idleness is rooted in the denial of this harmony], but also that he is in agreement with the world and its meaning. Leisure lives on affirmation. It is not the same as the absence of activity; it is not the same thing as quiet, or even as an inner quiet. It is rather like the stillness in the conversation of lovers, which is fed by their oneness. In Hölderlin’s poetic fragment, *die Musse*, are found the following three verses: ”I stand in a peaceful meadow /as a beloved Elm tree, and as vines and bunches of grapes, /the sweet play of

life coils around me." And as it is written in the Scriptures, God saw, when "he rested from all the works that He had made" that everything was good, very good (Genesis 1, 31), just so the leisure of man includes within itself a celebratory, approving, lingering gaze of the inner eye on the reality of creation.

The highest form of affirmation is the festival; and according to Karl Kerényi, the historian of religion, to festival belong "peace, intensity of life, and contemplation all at once."[54] The holding of a festival means: an affirmation of the basic meaning of the world, and an agreement with it, and in fact it means to live out and fulfill one's inclusion in the world, in an extraordinary manner, different from the everyday.

The festival is the origin of leisure, its inmost and ever-central source. And this festive character is what makes leisure not only "effortless" but the very opposite of effort or toil.

In the third place, leisure stands opposed to the exclusiveness of the paradigm of work as social function.

The simple "break" from work – the kind that lasts an hour, or the kind that lasts a week or longer – is part and parcel of daily working life. It is something that has been built into the whole working process, a part of the schedule. The "break" is there for the sake of work. It is supposed to provide "new strength" for "new work," as the word "refreshment" indicates: one is refreshed *for* work through being refreshed *from* work.

Leisure stands in a perpendicular position with respect to the working process – in just the same way as the "simple gaze" of *intellectus* does not consist in the "duration" (so to speak) of *ratio*'s working-out process, but instead cuts through it at the perpendicular (the ancients compared the *ratio* with time, the *intellectus* with the "always now" of eternity).[55] Now leisure is not there for the sake of work, no matter how much new strength the one who resumes working may gain from it; leisure in our sense is not justified by providing bodily renewal or even mental refreshment to lend new vigor to further work – although it does indeed bring such things!

As contemplation, so leisure is of a higher rank than the *vita activa* (even though this – the active life – is the truly "human" in a sense). But the ranking cannot be reversed: while it is true that the one who prays before going to bed sleeps better, surely nobody would want to think of praying as a means of

going to sleep. In the same way, nobody who wants leisure merely for the sake of ”refreshment” will experience its authentic fruit, the deep refreshment that comes from a deep sleep.

Leisure is not justified in making the functionary as ”trouble-free” in operation as possible, with minimum ”downtime,” but rather in keeping the functionary *human* (or as Newman said it, so that he can stay a *gentleman*); and this means that the human being does not disappear into the parceled-out world of his limited work-a-day function, but instead remains capable of taking in the world as a whole, and thereby to realize himself as a being who is oriented toward the whole of existence.[56]

This is why the ability to be ”at leisure” is one of the basic powers of the human soul. Like the gift of contemplative self-immersion in Being, and the ability to uplift one’s spirits in festivity, the power to be at leisure is the power to step beyond the working world and win contact with those superhuman, life-giving forces that can send us, renewed and alive again, into the busy world of work. Only in such authentic leisure can the ”door into freedom” be opened out of the confinement of that ”hidden anxiety,” which a certain perceptive observer[57] has seen as the distinctive character of the working world, for which ”employment and unemployment are the two poles of an existence with no escape.”

In leisure – not only there, but certainly there, if anywhere – the truly human is rescued and preserved precisely because the area of the ”just human” is left behind over and over again – and this is not brought about through the application of extreme efforts but rather as with a kind of ”moving away” (and this ”moving” is of course more difficult than the extreme, active effort; it is ”more difficult” because it is less at one’s own disposal; the condition of utmost exertion is more easily to be realized than the condition of relaxation and detachment, even though the latter is effortless: this is the paradox that reigns over the attainment of leisure, which is at once a human and super-human condition). As Aristotle said of it: ”man cannot live this way insofar as he is man, but only insofar as something divine dwells in him.”[58]

IV

After our initial attempt, in the foregoing pages, to formulate a conception of leisure, further questions remain concerning its intrinsic significance, its ”prospects” for being realized, its peculiar *impetus* or trajectory in history. Or, to put the matter more concretely: will it ever be possible to keep, or reclaim, some room for leisure from the forces of the total world of work? And this would mean not merely a little portion of rest on Sunday, but rather a whole ”preserve” of true, unconfined humanity: a space of freedom, of true learning, of attunement to the world–as–a–whole? In other words, will it be possible to keep the human being from becoming a complete functionary, or ”worker”? What would have to be done beforehand in order for this to succeed? For that the world of the ”Worker” is pushing into history with a monstrous momentum (we are almost inclined, rightly or wrongly, to speak of an unleashed ”demonic power” in history), of *that*, there can be no doubt.

Resistance to this has been attempted from several directions and did not begin yesterday. To be sure, certain forms of resistance have proved inadequate. For instance, the position so fiercely fought for during the First World War, of ”art for art’s sake” (*l’art pour l’art*), has now become a somewhat more justified attempt to shield the realm of art from the widespread ”utilization” of the world. And in our time [i.e., the post–World War II era], when the real historical battle-lines are covered over and still unclear behind all the scaffolding of restoration, still other attempts are underway, such as: reaching back to ”Tradition” in general,[59] calling upon the duty that comes with our ancient origins, the battle over the Gymnasium [academic high school], and the academic and philosophic character of university education (and that is a fight to keep the *schola* something other than an institute for career-training), and even Humanism in general – these are some of the movements through which a threatened value is seeking to regain strength and defend its existence.

The question, however, is whether positions like these will really hold out, or rather, whether they *can* do so. Is ”Humanism” an adequate concept – adequate not just in terms of its psychological appeal and attractiveness but in

its ability to provide metaphysical legitimation, ultimate credibility, and specific, historically effective relevance? (Incidentally, it is interesting to note that in East Germany ”Humanism” has been brought into use to describe economic materialism, while in France the atheistic existentialists would like to be considered *humanistes* and neither use is completely wrong!). In fact, the question we are asking is whether an appeal to the *humanum* as such can suffice against the demands of the ”total world of work.”

But before we attempt to answer this question, the social aspect of our problem needs to be addressed. Therefore, with an eye to a few related misunderstandings that hover around the problem, we will proceed to an *Excursus* on ”proletariat” and ”de–proletarianization.”

Excursus on ”Proletariat” and ”De–proletarianization”

We have maintained that the expression ”intellectual worker” contains an especially concise formulation of the totalitarian claims of the world of work. Now, *Trübners Deutsche Wörterbuch* [a standard German dictionary] maintains that these relatively recent terms ”intellectual work” and ”intellectual worker” perform a useful service because they overcome the (age-old, but in modern times increasingly sharpened) opposition in society between a student and one who works with his hands.[60] Now, if we *don't* accept the terms, or do so only with reservations, does that involve us in a definite viewpoint with regard to this social opposition? Our refusal to allow the concept ”intellectual worker” validity certainly does imply something, at least the following: *the overcoming of the class-opposition in society is either not possible or desirable at the level of ”working.”* But would this not mean, then, that the gap between an academic educational level, which can afford to take knowledge for its own sake, and the proletarian, who only knows the ”break” – barely enough to renew him for his daily input of labor – will not this gap necessarily get *deeper* as a result of our thesis, no matter what our attitude or intention?

This is no small objection.

Plato, in fact, in one passage opposes the type of the philosopher to the type of the *banausos* [hand-worker]. The philosophers are those ”who have been brought up, not like slaves, but in the opposite way. And this, O Theodoros, is the way of each of them: the one, who has been raised truly in freedom and leisure, whom you call a philosopher and who can get away with appearing very simple and good for nothing, when it comes to practical accomplishments, so that he seems not to know how to tie a knot, to fasten up a bundle to be carried, or how to cook up a tasty dish... ; the other is the way of the one who knows how to do all these things nimbly and neatly, but does not know how to wear his cloak like a free man, and much less, how to praise with worthy accent the true life of gods and men... ” This comes from the *Theaetetus*.[61] In clarification of this passage, and with regard to the ancient conception of the *banausos*, it can also be said, that Plato means not only the

uneducated, not only the *amousos* [without the Muses], and not only the man with no spiritual relationship with the world, but rather, and expressly, the man who lives by his hands, in contrast with the man who is "well off" and able to dispose freely of his time.

So then: are we suggesting that the concept of the *banausic* should be renewed, with all its pre-Christian social and educational baggage? Not in the least! But then again, isn't such a consequence included in the denial that the word "work" – which, as is frequently said, is a noble word – can be used to indicate the *whole* area of intellectual activity? No, again! What I mean to say, instead, is that, on the one hand, one should do everything in one's power to overcome such an opposition immediately, but that, on the other hand, we should take care not to do something wrong, something completely nonsensical, in order to attain that goal. We would be doing just that if we were to seek social unity in the so-to-speak purely terminological "proletarianizing" of the educational level, and not in a real "de–proletarianizing" of the proletariat.

But what do such words really mean – *proletariat*, *proletarian*, *de–proletarianize*? It would seem a good idea, at this point, to leave off discussing the political feasibility of de–proletarization, and pose the theoretical question of principle: "What is it to be *proletarian* really, what is *proletariat* and *de–proletarianization*?"

Being "proletarian," first of all, is not the same as being *poor*. One can be poor without being proletarian: the beggar in the class-structured medieval society was not a proletarian. On the other hand, one can be a proletarian, without being poor: the engineer, the "specialist" in the total–work state is, certainly, proletarian. Secondly, one must still state the obvious: the negative aspect of the proletariat, the aspect we need to remove from it, does not consist in the fact that the condition is limited to a certain social class, so that the only way to eliminate the "negative" would be to have *everyone* proletarian! "Proletarianism," then, clearly cannot be overcome by proletarianizing *everyone*.

Once again, then, what *is* it to be proletarian? If we take all the various sociological definitions and reduce them to a common denominator, it can be summed up something like this: *being proletarian is being bound to the working–process*.

In this definition, ”working–process” does not refer in general to the entire complex of human action that never comes to a stop; proletarianness is not simply the orientation of man to activity as such. ”Work” is meant as *useful* activity, which means that by definition, work does not have its meaning in itself, but is directed toward some thing socially advantageous, a *bonum utile*, the realization of practical values and needs. And the ”working process” is the comprehensive, task-distributing process of usefulness, through which and in which the ”common use” is realized (and ”common use” has not the same meaning as the much more comprehensive term, ”common good”).

To be bound to the working process is to be bound to the whole process of usefulness, and moreover, to be bound in such a way that the whole life of the working human being is consumed.

This ”binding” can have various causes. The cause may be lack of ownership, for the proletarian is the ”wage–earner without property,” who ”has nothing but his work,” and thus he is constantly forced to sell his working–power.[62] But such binding to the working process can also be caused by dictate of the total–working state. The proletarian is one who, whether or not he owns property, is constantly on the move ”because of the practical necessities of the absolutely rational production of goods.”[63] In a third way, the binding to the working-process can have its roots in the inner poverty of the person: the proletarian is one whose life is fully satisfied by the working-process itself because this space has been shrunken from within, and because meaningful action that is not work is no longer possible or even imaginable.

One could add that these forms of proletarianism, especially the two latter, are mutually encouraging: the total–working state needs the spiritually impoverished functionary, while such a person is inclined to see and embrace an ideal of a fulfilled life in the total ”use” made of his ”services.”

And in regard to this internal binding to the work–process, a further question may be posed: whether or not proletarianism, so conceived, is a symptom that characterizes *all* the levels of society and is not at all limited to the social sector of the proletariat; it is a *general* symptom that can be seen unusually clearly and in isolation in the ”proletariat”; indeed, the question is whether we are not all proletarians – even though our political views may be

expressly opposed to one another's – all ripe and ready to fall into line as ready functionaries for the collective working–state. And shouldn't the fortification of the mind against the seductive strength of "total" education need to be sought from a *deeper* renewal of consciousness than could be expected from the merely political level?[64]

It is in this connection that the distinction between the *artes liberales* and the *artes serviles* obtains fresh significance. As Thomas put it, it was the orientation toward "a utility to be reached through action" that Antiquity and the Middle Ages saw as the essential feature of the *artes serviles*. Proletarianism would consequently be equivalent to the narrowing of existence and activity to the realm of the *artes serviles* – whether this narrowness be conditioned through lack of ownership, compulsion of the state, or spiritual poverty. "De–proletarization" would consequently be the widening of one's existence beyond the realm of the "merely useful," "servile" work, and the restriction of the area of the *artes serviles*, to benefit the *arts liberales*. And in the realization of such a program, again, three things would be necessary: building up of property from wages, limiting the power of the state, and overcoming internal poverty.

Of course, the very term "servile arts" sounds horrible to our ears today. Nevertheless, it is extremely risky to want to deny this character to work. For through the fiction, that work does *not* primarily "serve" some end beyond itself, the very opposite happens from that which someone intends to accomplish thereby: the very opposite of a "liberation" or "rehabilitation" of the working man takes place. What happens is actually the effect of the inhumanity of the total world of work: the final binding of man to the process of production, which is itself understood and proclaimed to be the intrinsically meaningful realization of human existence.

Authentic *de–proletarianization*, on the other hand, which should not be confused with the struggle against need – and no words need be wasted on the urgency of that struggle – and de–proletarianization assumes that the distinction between the *liberal* and the *servile arts* is meaningful in the distinction between "useful activity" on the one hand (which do not have their meaning only in themselves), and *free* arts, on the other hand, which are not used for, nor adaptable to, "useful purposes"; and it is completely in keeping

with their position, if the promoters of a ”proletarianization of everyone” dislike this distinction and try to show that it is unfounded.

For example, the distinction between the ”servile” and ”liberal” arts is related to the distinction between an ”honorarium” and a ”wage.” The liberal arts are ”honored”; the servile arts are ”paid in wages.” The concept of the honorarium implies a certain lack of equivalence between achievement and reward, that the service itself ”really” cannot be rewarded. Wages, on the other hand (taken in their purest sense, in which they differ from the honorarium), mean payment for work as an article or commodity: the service can be ”compensated” through the wage, there is a certain ”equivalency.” But the honorarium means something beyond this: it contributes to one’s life-support, whereas a wage (again, in the strict sense) means the payment for the isolated accomplishment of the work, without regard for the life-support of the working person. It is characteristic, now, of the mind that has been formed by the ”worker” ideal, to deny this distinction between honorarium and wage: there are only ”wages.” Thus Jean-Paul Sartre, in one of his programmatic essays on the contemporary writer,[65] where the ”social function” of literature is proclaimed, maintains that the writer who only rarely knows how to ”create a relationship between his works and their material compensation,” must learn to see himself as ”a worker, who gets compensation for his efforts.” Here, any incommensurability between achievement and compensation, as expressed in the concept of the honorarium, is denied, even in the realm of philosophy and poetry, which is looked upon as nothing other than intellectual *labor*. By contrast, a social doctrine that thinks in terms inherited from Christian Europe, not only would want to preserve the distinction between wages and honorarium; and not only would it deny that any compensation is equivalent to any wage; such a doctrine would also hold that there exists no compensation for any accomplishment that does not also include, more or less, the character of the honorarium; and this would be seen even in the ”servile” arts, insofar as they are a *human* action, something that cannot be adequately paid for with money. Even in these activities there is a certain incomparability between accomplishment and compensation, as in the ”liberal” arts.

So then we arrive at the seeming paradox, that a totalitarian dictator can say that payment for labor must be measured ”according to productivity, and

not according to needs,"[66] while in the Encyclical Letter *Quadragesimo anno*, (the aim of which was de–proletarianization), we read: "In the first place, the worker is entitled to a wage that should suffice for the life-support of himself and his family."[67]

On the one hand, then, there is an attempt to narrow the space of the liberal arts, or indeed to remove them altogether: the only kind of work that makes sense is work that can be "paid." On the other hand, there is the attempt to broaden the area of the "liberal arts" and bring them into the area of the "servile arts." The former aims at everyone's proletarianization, the latter at everyone's de–proletarianization.

From this perspective, then, with the total–work state, defining all non-useful activity as "undesirable" and absorbing even leisure time into its service, can we not see what it means for there to be an institution in the world that prohibits useful actions, or the "servile arts" on certain days, and thus prepares space for a non-proletarian existence?

Consequently one of the first socialists, P. J. Proudhon[68] (whom Marx rejected, of course, as a *petit–bourgeois*), was not so far off the mark when he began his life–work with an essay on the celebration of Sunday, the social significance he expressed as follows: "The servants regain their human dignity for a day, and put themselves on a level with their masters."[69] And the following sentence, taken from the introduction to that pamphlet, hits very close to the heart of the problem: "Amidst all the problems, so much in the forefront of current attention, about work and compensation, organization of industry and the nationalization of the workplace, it occurred to me that it would help to consider a legislative program based on the theory of *rest*."[70] Of course, the true depth of such a "theory of rest" would not come into view if it were treated exclusively, as it was by Proudhon, "from the perspective of health, morality, family and civil relationships." And this very point will have to be addressed in what follows.

We can now sum up what has been said in this *excursus*: when "being proletarian" means nothing other than being bound to the work–process, the real key to overcoming the condition – that is to say, a true *de–proletarianization* – would consist in making available for the working person

a meaningful kind of activity that is *not* work – in other words, by opening up an area of true leisure.

But political measures which expand life economically only are not sufficient to attain this goal. Although, to be sure, something necessary would be done thereby, the decisive thing would still be missing: it is not enough merely to create the external conditions for leisure; the project would only come to fruition if it were possible for the human being as such to "be–at–leisure," as the Greek expression has it – [*scholen agein*], "to do leisure" – whereby the "not-idle" nature of the real leisure is indicated). **"This is the main question, with what activity one's leisure is filled."**[71] Would anyone have guessed that such a sentence is taken from a book over two-thousand years old: the *Politics* of Aristotle?

V

But how does leisure become possible at all, at the deepest, innermost level, and what is its ultimate justification?

Let us now pose the question again: is recourse to the ”human” really enough to preserve and firmly ground the reality of leisure? I intend to show that such recourse to mere Humanism is simply not enough.

It could be said that the heart of leisure consists in ”festival.” In festival, or celebration, all three conceptual elements come together as one: the relaxation, the effortlessness, the ascendancy of ”being at leisure” [*doing* leisure, *scholen agein*] over mere ”function.”

But if celebration and festival are the heart of leisure, then leisure would derive its innermost possibility and justification from the very source whence festival and celebration derive theirs. *And this is worship.*

To experience and live out a harmony with the world, in a manner quite different from that of everyday life – this, we have said, is the meaning of ”festival.” But no more intensive harmony with the world can be thought of than that of ”Praise of God,” the worship of the Creator of this world. Now, as I have often experienced, this statement is often received with a mixture of discomfort and various other feelings, but its truth cannot be denied. The most festive festival that can be celebrated is religious worship, or ”cult,”[72] and there is no festival that does not get its life from such worship or does not actually derive its origin from this. There is no worship ”without the gods,” whether it be *mardi gras* or a wedding. This is not intended to be a prescription; rather, it is *necessarily* so. The statement is made with certainty: a festival that does not get its life from worship, even though the connection in human consciousness be ever so small, is not to be found. To be sure, since the French Revolution, people have tried over and over to create artificial festivals without any connection with religious worship, or even against such worship, such as the ”Brutus Festival” or ”Labor Day,” but they all demonstrate, through the forced and narrow character of their festivity, what religious worship provides to a festival; scarcely nothing could be experienced more clearly than that genuine festivity is only to be seen where there is still some living relationship with religious ”cult.” Clearer than the light of day is

the difference between the living, rooted trees of genuine, cultic festival and our artificial festivals that resemble those ”maypoles,” cut at the roots, and carted here and there, to be planted for some definite purpose. Of course, we may have to prepare ourselves for the possibility that we are only at the dawn of an age of artificial festivals. Were we [in Germany] prepared for the possibility that the official forces, and especially the bearers of political power, would artificially create *the appearance of the festive* with so huge an expense in external arrangements? And that this seductive, scarcely detectable appearance of artificial ”holidays” would be so totally lacking in the essential quality, that true and ultimate harmony with the world? And that such holidays would in fact depend on the suppression of that harmony and derive their dangerous seduction from that very fact?

What holds true of festival also holds true of leisure. Its ultimate, innermost possibility and justification come from its rootedness in cultic festival. This is no conceptually abstract construct, but is simply evidence from the history of religion. What does ”rest from work” signify for the Bible or for ancient Greece and Rome? The meaning of a rest from labor is cultic: definite days and times were designated to the exclusive possession of the gods.[73] Worship is to time as the temple is to space.

”Temple” has a certain meaning (reflected also in its etymology, cf. Greek *temenos*, from *temnein*, to cut; Latin *templum*): a definite physical space has been ”cut off” by enclosure or fencing from the rest of the land, whose surface was divided up for farming or other uses. These sectioned-off spaces were handed over to the possession of the gods and were not inhabited or planted but were removed from all practical use. Just so, through religious festival, and for the sake of religious festival, or ”cult,” from day-to-day *time* a definite period was separated off, and this period of time, no otherwise than the ground-surfaces of the temple and places of sacrifice, would *not* be used, and would likewise be kept from use. Every seventh day was such a time period. It is the ”festival-time” that came to be in precisely this way. Now there can be no unused space in the total world of work, neither an unused area of ground nor an unused time; nor can there be a space for worship or festival: for this is the principle of rational utility, on which the world of the ”worker” exclusively depends. Within the world of total work, the ”festival” is either ”a break from work” (and thus only there for the sake of work), or it is

a more intensive celebration of the principles of work itself (as in the "Labor Days," and thus belongs, again, to the working world). There will naturally be "games" – like the Roman *circenses* – but who could dignify the amusements for the masses with the name of "festival"?

There is nothing, then, to keep the world of the "worker" from being a poor, sterile world, even though filled with material goods; thanks to the principle of utility, in virtue of which the "world of work" comes into being, there can be no real wealth, no overflow. Wherever something is left over, this excess will be subjected again to the principle of rational utility. "Work does not make you rich; it only makes you bent over," as the old Russian saying goes.

On the other hand, it is in the nature of religious festival to make a space of abundance and wealth, even in the midst of external poverty in material things. This is because *sacrifice* is at the center of the festival. What is sacrifice? It is voluntary, a gift that is offered, and certainly *not* usefulness, but the very opposite of usefulness. Thus in the very midstream of worship, and only from there, comes a supply that cannot be consumed by the world of work, a space of uncountable giving, untouched by the ever-turning wheel of buying and selling, an overflow released from all purpose, and an authentic wealth: it is festival-time.

And it is only within such festival–time that the reality of leisure can unfold and be fully realized.

However, divorced from the realm of worshipful celebration and its influence, leisure has no more meaning than festival has. When separated from worship, leisure becomes toilsome, and work becomes inhuman.

This is the origin of secondary forms of leisure, which are as closely related to the absence of leisure as idleness (in the old metaphysical/theological sense of *acedia*). Mere time-killing and boredom gain ground, which are directly related to the absence of leisure, for only someone who has lost the spiritual power to be at leisure can be bored. And then Despair, the sister of Restlessness, rears its hideous head. A sentence from Charles Baudelaire's *Intimate Journals* stirs us with the cold precision of its cynicism, when he formulates this very connection: "One must work, if not from inclination, at least from despair, since, as I have fully proved, to work is less wearisome than to amuse oneself."[74]

On the other hand, work itself, when deprived of its counterparts genuine festivity and true leisure, becomes inhuman: it may, whether endured silently or "heroically," become a bare, hopeless effort, resemble the labor of Sisyphus, who in fact is the mythical paradigm of the "Worker" chained to his labor without rest, and without inner satisfaction.

In an acute form, an alienation from worship – or even an hostility to it – can typify the isolated working–intellect to such a degree, that work itself becomes a cult: "To work is to pray," said Carlyle, in whose writings the following statement can be read: "Fundamentally speaking, all genuine work is religion, and every religion that is not work can go and live with the Brahmins, the Antinomians, and the Whirling Dervishes."[75] Would anyone want to say that this is merely a marginal opinion from the nineteenth century, expressed in pathetic terms, and not rather the very state of mind of the total world of work, which our world is preparing to become?

The deepest root, then, from which leisure draws its sustenance and leisure implies the realm of everything that, without being useful, nevertheless belongs to a complete human existence – the deepest root of all this lies in worshipful celebration.

In those eras, when an authentic cultic order exists in undisputed validity, it is (perhaps!) not as necessary to make the rationale so explicit; and insofar as, in such times, a justification of leisure may be required, it may (perhaps!) be sufficient to argue at a merely "humanistic" level.

But in an epoch of extreme oppositions, where the world of work lays claim to the whole field of human existence, recourse must be had to our "last savings account," a legitimation that reaches back to the most remote source.

The merely academic reminiscence of Antiquity becomes practically meaningless in times like these; against the pressing *impetus*, from both within and without, of the total world of work, nothing can avail, no matter what is thrown into the balance. The reference to Plato is no longer enough, even if one presses all the way back to the roots of Plato (and we are not speaking of "predecessors" here, but roots). Nor can it help to trace back philosophical education to the Platonic academy, even though one may take seriously and affirm the religious character of this earliest "Academy," from which everything "academic" in the world gets its name, deservedly or no; the

school of Plato, in fact, was a genuine religious organization, one of whose members, for example, held the office of "sacrifice maker."[76]

Should not then the common meaning of the expression, "purely academic," *for this very reason* have sunk to the meaning of "sterile, ineffectual, unreal," so that even the fundamental origin of *schola* in religious cult was forgotten, and in place of reality, we have a nonbinding world of mannikins and optional illusions, such as a "Temple of the Muses," or a "Temple of Holy Relics"? In any case, Goethe appears to have been of such an opinion, when, in an astounding remark on the classicism of his day, calls all the "*inventa* of the Ancients to be 'matters of belief' which were only fancifully imitated, for fancy's sake."[77]

Once again, in our time it has become absurd to attempt to defend the realm of leisure on the basis of the foregoing positions. The region of leisure, as said, is the region of culture in general, so long as this word signifies what goes beyond mere means-to-an-end considerations. **Culture lives on "worship."** And we must return to this original relationship when the question is considered as a whole.

This is likewise the meaning of the great Platonic text placed at the outset of this essay. In it, the origin of leisure[78] in worship, and the association of "the Muses" with cultic festival are expressed in a magnificent image, "in festive consort with the gods," man regains his true worth, and recovers his upright posture.

But now, what are we *to do*? someone may ask.

Now, the intention of this essay was not to give advice or provide guidelines for action but only to encourage reflection. The aim was to shed a little light on a matter which seems very important and very pressing, but which seems to get lost behind the tasks of the day so much in the forefront of our attention.

This essay, then, was not designed for an immediately practical purpose.

And yet, by way of conclusion, a certain hope can be expressed, for in this field what is decisive is not what is realized through action but what can give us some cause to hope. In the effort to regain a space of true leisure, to bring about a fundamentally correct attitude and "exercise" of leisure, the real difficulty of this so-often despaired-of project consists in the fact that the

ultimate root of leisure lies outside the range of our responsible, voluntary action. The fullest harmony with the world, to be precise, cannot come about on the basis of a voluntary decision. Above all, one cannot simply ”make” it happen for some ulterior purpose. There are certain things which one cannot do ”in order to...” do something else. One either does not do them at all or one does them because they are meaningful in themselves. Certainly the doctors are correct in saying that lack of leisure makes one ill. But at the same time, it is impossible to be truly at leisure merely for the sake of health. Such logical confusion is not only unfitting, it simply cannot be work. Leisure cannot be realized so long as one understands it to be a means, even as a means to the end of ”rescuing the culture of Christian Europe.” The celebration of God’s praises cannot be realized unless it takes place for its own sake. But this – the most noble form of harmony with the world as a whole – is the deepest source of leisure.

And so our hope is directed, in the first place, to this: it is possible that the many signs both near and far that point to a reawakening of the sense of worship will not prove deceptive. For, once again, the beginning of a new, genuine cult cannot be expected from merely human foundation; it belongs to the nature of worship, to take its rise from divine establishment (and this aspect is also included in our quotation from Plato). The appeal of the ”already made” and ”already established” can lose strength, but it can also regain strength. And this alone (i.e., not the re-establishment of an old cult or the inauguration of a new one) is what our hopes are aiming for. Whoever has kept no possibility of hope in this (and such hopelessness can, to be sure, in many cases become self-perpetuating) or whoever cannot see here anything worth hoping for – for someone like that, I could not make room for any kind of trust at all. It is very important that there be no doubt about this.

Worship itself is a given – or it does not exist at all. Nothing needs to be founded or arranged. For Christians, this is self-evident: that, after Christ, there is only *one* true and finally valid form of cultic worship, which is the sacramental Sacrifice of the Christian Church. (Incidentally, even for the student, Christian or non-Christian, of the ”history of religions,” it is really not possible to meet with any actually established cult other than the Christian, in the world-wide European culture.)

It is the peculiarity of this phenomenon of Christian worship that it is at once sacrifice and sacrament.[79] Insofar as the celebration of Christian worship is *sacrifice*, taking place in the midst of creation and reaching its highest affirmation and fulfillment in this sacrifice of the God–Man, to this extent it is truly an eternally valid celebration so that even the weekday is called *aferia* in Latin: the liturgy only recognizes festival-days.[80] But, insofar as this sacrificial ritual is also a *sacrament*, it takes place as a bodily visible sign. And only then can the Christian cultic worship unfold its whole, indwelling, formative power, when its sacramental character is realized without any curtailment, when the sacramental sign is allowed to become fully visible. For, as I said, in leisure man overcomes the working world of the work–day – not through his utter most exertion, but as in *withdrawal* from such exertion. Now this is exactly the meaning of sacramental visibility: that the human being is ”rapt” or ”seized” and ”removed” by it. And this is no private, romantic interpretation. For it is with like words that the Church Herself expresses the meaning of the Human Incarnation of the Logos: *ut dum visibiliter Deum cognoscimus, per hunc in invisibilium amorein rapiamur*, that through the ”visible” reality of this Sacrifice we may be ”rapt” to the love of ”invisible” reality.[81]

It is our hope, then, that this true meaning of sacramental visibility maybe met with in the celebration of the cultic worship, in such a way that it can be realized concretely for the human being ”born to labor”: to be taken from the toil of the work–day, to an endless day of celebration; to be rapt from the confines of the working environment into the very center of the world.

Part II
The Philosophical Act

The reason why the philosopher can be compared to the poet is that both are concerned with wonder...

- St. Thomas Aquinas

I

When the physicist poses the question, ”What does it mean to do physics?” or ”What is research in physics?” – his question is a preliminary question. Clearly, when you ask a question like that, and try to answer it, you are not ”doing physics.” Or, rather, you are *no longer* doing physics. But when you ask yourself, ”What does it mean to do philosophy?” then you actually are ”doing philosophy” – this is not at all a ”preliminary” question but a truly philosophical one: you are right at the heart of the business. To go further: I can say nothing about the existence of philosophy and philosophizing without also saying something about the human being, and to do that is to enter one of the most central regions of philosophy. Our question, ”What is the philosophical act?” belongs, in fact, to the field of philosophical anthropology.

Now, because it is a philosophical question, that means it cannot be answered in a permanent or conclusive way. It pertains to the very nature of a philosophical question that its answer will not be a ”perfectly rounded truth” (as Parmenides said it), grasped in the hand like an apple plucked from a tree. Later, we will have occasion to discuss the ”hopefulness” built into philosophy and philosophizing, but for the moment we cannot promise a handy definition, a comprehensive answer to our question. Indeed, our four brief essays will barely be enough to clarify the problem as a whole.

But, for a first approach, we can venture the following: a philosophical act is an act in which the work–a–day world is transcended. We must first explain what we mean by ”work-a-day world,” and second, what we mean by ”transcending” it.

The work–a–day world is the world of the working day, the world of usefulness, of purposeful action, of accomplishment, of the exercising of functions; it is the world of supply and demand, the world of hunger and the satisfaction of hunger. It is a world dominated by one goal: the realization of the ”common utility”; it is the world of work, to the extent that work is synonymous with ”useful activity” (a characteristic both of activity and effort). The process of working is the process of realizing the ”common utility”; this concept is not equivalent to that of the ”common good” (*bonum*

commune): the "common utility" is an essential component of the "common good," but the concept of the *bonum commune* is much more comprehensive. For example, as Thomas puts it[82], there are people who devote themselves to the "un-useful" life of contemplation; to philosophize belongs to the common good, whereas one could not say that contemplation, vision, or philosophizing serve the "common utility." Of course, in the present day *bonum commune* and the "common utility" seem to be growing more identical every day; of course (it comes to the same thing) the world of work begins to become – threatens to become – our only world, to the exclusion of all else. The demands of the working world grow ever more total, grasping ever more completely the whole of human existence.

If it is correct to say that the philosophical act is one which transcends the working world, then our question, "What does it mean to philosophize?" – our so very theoretical, abstract question – becomes suddenly, and unexpectedly, a question of utmost relevance. We need only to take a single step, in our thoughts or in physical space, to find ourselves in a world in which the working process, the process of realizing the "common utility," determines the whole realm of human existence. Inwardly and outwardly, there is a boundary, very near and easy to jump across, in order to win entry into the work–a–day world, in which there is no such thing as genuine philosophy and genuine philosophizing – all this presupposes, of course, that it is correct to say that "philosophy transcends the working world" and that it pertains to the very essence of the philosophical act *not* to belong this world of uses and efficiencies, of needs and satisfactions, this world of "useful good" (*bonum utile*), of the "common utility," but is, rather, to be incommensurable to it in principle. Indeed, the more acute the incommensurability, the more obvious the "not-belonging." It could even be said, perhaps, that this very opposition, this threat from the world of total work, is what characterizes the situation of philosophy today more than its own particular content. Philosophy increasingly adopts necessarily, it seems the character of the *alien*, of mere intellectual luxury, of that which seems ever more intolerable and unjustifiable, the more exclusively the demands of the daily world of work take over the world of man.

And yet, we have something more to say, something very concrete, about the incommensurability of the philosophical act, of this transcending the

world of work, that takes place in the philosophical act.

Let's recall the things that dominate the contemporary working day; no special effort of the imagination is needed, for we all stand right in the middle of it. There is, first of all, the daily running back and forth to secure our bare physical existence, food, clothing, shelter, heat; then, the anxieties that affect, and absorb, each individual: the necessities of rebuilding our own country, Europe, and the world. Struggles for power for the exploitation of earth's commodities, conflicts of interest in matters great and small. Everywhere, tensions and burdens – only superficially eased by hastily arranged pauses and diversions: newspapers, movies, cigarettes. I do not need to paint it in any fuller detail: we all know what this world looks like. And we need not only direct our attention to the extreme instances of crisis that show themselves today: I mean simply the everyday working world, where we must go about our business, where very concrete goals are advanced and realized: goals that must be sighted with an eye fixed on the things nearest and closest at hand. Now it is not our purpose here to condemn this world, from the standpoint of some "holiday–world" of philosophy. No words need be wasted on saying that this work–a–day world is very much with us, that in it the foundations of our physical existence are secured, without which nobody can philosophize at all! Nevertheless, let us also recall, that among the voices which fill the workplace and the markets ("How do you get this or that item of daily existence?", "Where do you get that?" etc.) – in the midst of all these voices suddenly one calls out above the rest: "Why is there anything at all, and not nothing?" – asking that age-old question, which Heidegger called the basic question of all metaphysics![83] Must we explicitly state how unfathomable this philosopher's question is, in comparison with that everyday world of needs and purposefulness? If such a question as this were asked, without introduction or interpretation, in the company of those people of efficiency and success, wouldn't the questioner be considered rather... mad? Through such extremely formulated contrasts, however, the real, underlying distinction comes to the fore: it becomes clear that even to ask that question constitutes taking a step toward transcending, toward leaving behind, the work–a–day world. The genuine philosophical question strikes disturbingly against the canopy that encloses the world of the citizen's work–day.

But the philosophical act is not the only way to take this "step beyond." No less incommensurable with the working-world than the philosophical question is the sound of true poetry:

In middle and ending ever stands the tree,
The birds are singing; on God's breast
The round Creation takes its holy rest ...[84]

Such a voice sounds utterly strange in the realm of actively realized purpose. And no differently sounds the voice of one who prays: "We praise you, we glorify you, we give you thanks for your great glory ..." How can that ever be understood in the categories of rational usefulness and efficiency? The lover, too, stands outside the tight chain of efficiency of this working world, and who ever else approaches the margin of existence through some deep, existential disturbance (which always brings a "shattering" of one's environment as well), or through, say, the proximity of death. In such a disturbance (for the philosophical act, genuine poetry, musical experience in general, and prayer as well – all these depend on some kind of disturbance) in such an experience, man senses the non-ultimate nature of this daily, worrisome world: he transcends it; he takes a step outside it.

And because of their common power to disturb and transcend, all these basic behavioral patterns of the human being have a natural connection among themselves: the philosophical act, the religious act, the artistic act, and the special relationship with the world that comes into play with the existential disturbance of Love or Death. Plato, as most of us know, thought about philosophy and love in similar terms. And as for the close connection between philosophy and poetry, we can refer to a little-known statement by Thomas Aquinas in his *Commentary on Aristotle's Metaphysics*: the Philosopher is akin to the Poet in this, that both are concerned with the *mirandum*, the "wondrous," the astonishing, or whatever calls for astonishment or wonder.[85] This statement is not that easy to fathom, since Thomas, like Aristotle, was a very sober thinker, completely opposed to any Romantic confusion of properly distinct realms. But on the basis of their common orientation toward the *"wonderful"* (the *mirandum* – something not to be found in the world of work!) – on this basis, then, of this common transcending-power, the philosophical act is related to the "wonderful," is in

fact more closely related to it than to the exact, special sciences; to this point we shall return.

The closeness of this connection is so real that when ever *one* member of the system is denied, the others cannot thrive: the result is that in a world of total work, all the various forms and methods of transcendence must themselves become sterile (or, rather, would *have* to become sterile, if it were possible to destroy human nature completely); where religion is not allowed to grow, where the arts can find no place, where the disturbances of love and death lose their depth and become banal – there too, philosophy and philosophizing cannot survive. But worse than the mere extinguishing or silencing is the distortion into false forms of the original; there are such pseudo–realizations of those basic experiences, which only appear to pierce the canopy. There is a way to pray, in which "this" world is not transcended, in which, instead, one attempts to incorporate the divine as a functioning component of the work–a–day machinery of purposes. Religion can be perverted into magic so that instead of self–dedication to God, it becomes the attempt to gain power over the divine and make it subservient to one's own will; prayer can become a technique for continuing to live life "under the canopy." And further: love can be narrowed so that the powers of self-giving become subservient to the goals of the confined ego, goals which arise from an anxious self-defense against the disturbances of the larger, deeper, world, which only the truly loving person can enter. There are pseudo–forms of art, a false poetry, which, instead of breaking through the roof over the work–a–day world, resigns itself, so to speak, to painting decorations on the interior surface of the dome, and puts itself more or less obviously to the service of the working world as private or public "fashion poetry"; such "poetry" never seems to transcend, not even once (and it is clear, that genuine philosophizing has more in common with the exact, special sciences than with such *pseudo*–poetry!).

Finally, there is a *pseudo*–philosophy, whose essential character is precisely that it does not transcend the working world. In a dialogue of Plato, Socrates asks the sophist Protagoras just what he teaches the youth who flock to see him? And the answer is, "I teach them good planning, both in their own affairs, such as how one should best manage his own household, and in public affairs, how one can best speak and act in the city-state."[86] That is the

classic program of "Philosophy as Professional Training" – a seeming philosophy only, with no transcendence.

But even worse still, of course, is that all these pseudo–forms work together, not only in failing to transcend the world, but in more and more surely succeeding in closing off the world "under the canopy": they seal off humanity all the more within the world of work. All these deceptive forms, and especially such seeming-philosophy, are something much worse, something much more hopeless, than the naive self-closing of the worldly man against what is not of daily-life. Someone who is merely naively confined to the work–a–day may one day nevertheless be touched by the disturbing power that lies hidden in a true philosophical question, or in some poem; but a sophist, a pseudo–philosopher, will never be "disturbed."

But let us now return to the path marked out by our initial question: when a question is asked in the truly philosophical manner, one asks about something that transcends the working world. This shows that such a question, and such a way of *calling into question*, possesses a special acuteness today, since the world of total work has emerged with demands more all-encompassing than ever before in history. And yet, this is not merely to make a criticism of a period of history. It is rather to speak of a misunderstanding that is fundamentally timeless in nature.

For Plato, the laughter of the Thracian maiden, who saw Thales of Miletus fall into a well while he was staring at the skies, is the typical response of feet-on-the-ground, work–a–day reasoning to philosophy. And this anecdote of the Thracian maid[87] stands at the very beginning of Western Philosophy. "And always," as Plato says in the *Theaetetus*, the philosopher is the butt of humor, "not only for Thracian maidens, but for most people, because one who is a stranger to the world falls into wells, and into many other embarrassments too."[88]

Plato does not only express himself explicitly, in formal statements: he prefers to use images. There is a certain Apollodoros, a character of secondary importance (as it seems at first) in the dialogues *Phaedo* and *Symposium*. Apollodoros is one of those uncritical, enthusiastic youths in Socrates' circle, who may represent someone like Plato himself once was. We hear of Apollodoros in the *Phaedo* that he alone among the assembled burst into groaning and tears when Socrates put the cup of hemlock to his lips:

”You know this man and his manner.”[89] In the *Symposium*[90] Apollodoros says of himself that for years he was eager to know what Socrates said and did every day. ”I ran around, and thought I was doing something, but was just as miserable as anyone.” But now, in a wonderful way, he has given himself over completely to Socrates and philosophy.

In the city now they call him ”crazy Apollodoros”; he rails against everyone (even himself) but only spares Socrates. In complete naiveté, he lets it be known everywhere, ”how happy he is, beyond all measure,” when he talks about philosophy or hears someone else do so; and then again, how wretched he is, that he has not yet attained to the real thing, to be like Socrates! One day, this Apollodoros encounters some friends of his from earlier days – the very ones, in fact, who now call him ”crazy”, the ”madman.” As Plato expressly points out, they are business people, people of money, who know precisely how someone can succeed, and who ”intend to do something big in the world.” These friends inquire of Apollodoros, to tell them something about the speeches about Love that were delivered at a certain banquet at the house of the poet Agathon. It is clear that these successful businessmen really feel no desire to be instructed about the meaning of life and existence, and certainly not from Apollodoros! What interests them is only the witty remarks, the well-spoken repartee, the formal elegance of the debate. And on his part, Apollodoros cherishes no illusions about the ”philosophical” interests of his old friends. Rather, he says directly to their face, how much he pities them, ”... because you believe you are accomplishing something, when you really are not. And maybe now you are thinking, I am not very well off, and you may be right, but I do not merely think’ the same about you, I know it for sure!” All the same, he does not refuse to tell them about the Love-speeches; indeed, he cannot be silent – ”If you really want me to tell you, I will have to do it” – even though they may take him for a madman. And then Apollodoros narrates... the *Symposium*! For the Platonic ”banquet” has the form of indirect speech: a report from the mouth of Apollodoros. Too little attention, in my view, has been paid to the fact that Plato allows his deepest thoughts to be expressed through this over-enthusiastic, uncritical youth, this over-eager disciple Apollodoros. And the audience of the report is a group of moneyed, successful Athenians, who are not really prepared to listen to such thoughts or even take them seriously!

There is something hopeless in this situation, a temptation to despair, against which (this is probably what Plato means) only the youthful, undistracted thirst for wisdom, the true *philosophia*, can take a stand. In any case, Plato could not have brought out any more clearly the incommensurability between philosophizing and the self–sufficient world of daily work.

And yet the incommensurability of this situation is not merely negative, for there is another side as well, known as... freedom. For philosophy is "useless" in the sense of immediate profit and application – that is one thing. Another thing is, that philosophy cannot allow itself to be used, it is not at the disposal of purposes beyond itself, for it is itself a goal. Philosophy is not functional–knowing, but rather, as John Henry Newman put it,[91] is *gentleman's* knowledge, not "useful," but "free" knowing. But this freedom means that philosophical knowing does not acquire its legitimacy from its utilitarian applications, not from its social function, not from its relationship with the "common utility." Freedom in exactly this sense is the freedom of the "liberal arts," as opposed to the "servile arts," which, according to Thomas, "are ordered to a use, to be attained through activity."[92] And philosophy has long been understood as the most free among the free arts (the medieval "Arts Faculty" is the forerunner of the "Philosophical Faculty" of today's university).

Therefore, it is all the same whether I say that the philosophical act transcends the working world, or whether I say, philosophical knowing is useless or whether I say, philosophy is a "liberal art." This freedom belongs to the particular sciences only to the extent that they are pursued in a philosophical manner. Here likewise is to be found – both historically and actually – the real meaning of "academic freedom" (since "academic" means "philosophical" if it means anything!); strictly speaking, a claim for academic freedom can only exist when the "academic" itself is realized in a "philosophical" way. And this is historically the reason: academic freedom has been lost, exactly to the extent that the philosophic character of academic study has been lost, or, to put it another way, to the extent that the totalitarian demands of the working world have conquered the realm of the university. Here is where the metaphysical roots of the problem lie: the "politicization" is only a symptom and consequence. And indeed, it must be admitted here that

this is nothing other than the fruit... of philosophy itself, of modern philosophy! Of which theme, more will soon have to be said.

But first, something needs to be said on the theme of philosophy's "freedom," in distinction from the special sciences: and this means a freedom understood as not-being-subordinated-to-purposes. In this sense, the special sciences are "free" only insofar as they are pursued in a philosophical way, insofar, that is to say, as they share in the freedom of philosophy. As Newman put it, "Knowledge, I say, is then especially liberal, or sufficient for itself, apart from every external and ulterior object, when and so far as it is philosophical."[93] Considered in themselves, however, the various particular sciences are essentially "to-be-subordinated-to-purposes"; they are essentially relatable to a "use that is reached through activity" (as Thomas says of the servile arts).[94]

But we can speak still more concretely! The government of a state can say, "In order to complete our five-year plan, we need physicists who can catch up with the progress of foreign nations in this or that special area," or "We need medical doctors, who can develop a more effective flu vaccine." In these cases, nothing is being said or done that is contrary to the nature of these sciences. But, if someone were to say, "We need some philosophers, who..." Will do what? There could only be one possibility: "... will justify, develop, defend, such and such an ideology..." To say this and act upon it would be a destruction of philosophy! And it would come to the same, if someone said, "We need some poets, who will..." Who will do what? Again, it could only be one thing: "who... will [as the expression goes] use the pen as a sword, on behalf of certain ideals determined by reasons of state..." And if this was being said, we would likewise see the destruction of poetry. In the same moment, poetry would cease to be poetry, and philosophy would cease to be philosophy.

But this is *not* to say that no relationship whatsoever can be found between the realization of the common good of a nation and any teaching of philosophy that takes place in it! Rather, the point is that such a relationship cannot be instituted and regulated by the administrators of the common good; that which has its meaning and purpose in itself, that which is itself purpose, cannot be made the means for some other purpose, just as someone can not love a person "for such and such" or "in order to do such and such"!

Now, this freedom of philosophy, this quality of not-being-subservient-to some purpose is intimately connected with something else (a connection which seems extremely important to point out): the theoretical character of philosophy. Philosophy is the purest form of *theorein*, or *speculari* (to observe, behold, contemplate), consisting in a purely receptive gaze on reality, whereby things alone are determinative, and the soul is completely receptive of determination. Whenever some existent is taken up into view in a philosophical way, the questions are asked in a "purely theoretical" manner, and that means a manner untouched by anything practical, by any intention to change things, and thereby be raised above all serving of further purposes.

The realization of *theoria* in this sense is, however, connected with a presupposition. For what is presumed is a definite relationship with the world, a relationship that appears to precede all conscious positing or setting-forth of some intention. For to be "theoretical" in this full sense (in the sense of a purely receptive contemplation, without the slightest trace of an intention to change things; rather, it is precisely the opposite, a willingness to make the "yes" or "no" of the will dependent on the actuality of being, which is to be brought to expression in the knowledge of being) – the vision of man will only be "theoretical" in this undiluted sense, when being, the world, is something *other* than him and is more than the mere field, the mere raw material, of human activity. Only that person can view the world "theoretically" in the fullest sense, for whom the world is something worthy of reverence, and ultimately, *creation* in the strict sense. On this foundation alone can be realized the "purely theoretical" property that is of the essence of philosophy. In this way, it would be a connection of the deepest and most intimate kind, whereby the freedom of philosophizing and of philosophy itself is ultimately made possible. And it would not be cause of wonder, that the removal of such a relationship with the world or such a connection (i.e., the connection in virtue of which the world is seen as creation, and not merely raw material) – that the removal of that connection would progress step by step with the destruction of the genuinely theoretical character of philosophy, as well as of its freedom and transcendence-over-function; and even the destruction of philosophy itself.

There is a direct path from Francis Bacon, who said, "Knowledge is Power," that the value of all knowing lies in the provision of human life with

new discoveries and helps,[95] to Descartes, who in his *Discourse on Method* explicitly formulated the polemical program to replace the old "theoretical" philosophy with a new "practical" one, through which we could make ourselves "the Lords and Masters of nature"[96] – from there the road leads directly into the well-known saying of Karl Marx, that up until his time philosophy saw its task as one of interpreting the world, but that now its task was to *change* the world.

This is the path along which the self-destruction of philosophy has traveled: through the destruction of its theoretical character, a destruction which in turn rests upon habitually seeing the world as the raw material of human activity. When the world is no longer looked upon as creation, there can no longer be *theoria* in the full sense. And with the fall of *theoria*, the freedom of philosophy falls as well, and what comes in its place is the functionalizing, the making it into something "practical," oriented toward a legitimation by its social function; what comes to the fore is the working character of philosophy, or of philosophy so-called. Meanwhile, our thesis (which can now be more clearly formulated), maintains that it is of the nature of the philosophical act, to transcend the world of work. This thesis, which comprehends both the freedom and theoretical character of philosophy, does not deny the world of work (in fact, it expressly presumes it as something necessary), but it maintains that true philosophy rests upon the belief that the real wealth of man lies not in the satisfaction of his necessities, nor, again, in "becoming lords and masters of nature," but rather in being able to understand *what is* – the whole of what is. Ancient philosophy says that this is the utmost fulfillment to which we can attain: that the whole order of real things be registered in our soul[97] – a conception which in the Christian tradition was taken up into the concept of the beatific vision: "What do they not see, who look upon Him, Who sees all?"[98]

II

So, then: whoever philosophizes, takes a step beyond the work–a–day world and its daily routine.

The meaning of taking such a step is determined less by where it *starts from* as by where it *leads to*. We must ask a further question: just where is the philosopher going when he transcends the world of work? Clearly, he steps over a boundary: what kind of region lies on the other side of this boundary? And what is the relationship of the place where the philosophical act happens, to the world that is transcended and left behind by this same philosophical act? Is that the ”authentic” world, and the world of work the ”inauthentic”? Is it the ”whole” as opposed to the ”part”? Is it the ”true reality” as opposed to a mere shadow world of appearances?

No matter how such questions could be answered in detail, in any case, *both* regions, the world of work and the ”other realm,” where the philosophical act takes place in its transcending of the working world – *both* regions belong to the world of man, which clearly has a complex structure.

Therefore, our next question is, ”What is the nature of the world of man?” a question that cannot be answered if the human being is ignored.

In order to give a clear answer at this point, we must begin again, and start as it were from the very bottom.

It is in the nature of a living thing to have a world: to exist and live in the world, in ”its” world. To live means to be ”in” a world. But is not a stone also ”in” a world? Is not everything that exists ”in” a world? If we keep to the lifeless stone, is it not with and beside other things in the world? Now, ”with,” ”beside,” and ”in” are prepositions, words of relationship; but the stone does not really have a relationship with the world ”in” which it is, nor to the other things ”beside” which and ”with” which it lives. Relationship, in the true sense, joins the inside with the outside; relationship can only exist where there is an ”inside,” a dynamic center, *from* which all operation has its source and *to* which all that is received, all that is experienced, is brought. The ”internal” (only in this qualitative sense: the ”inside” of a rock would refer only to the spatial location of parts) – the ”internal” is the ability to have a real relationship, a relation to the external; to have an ”inside,” means ability to be related, and to enter into relationship. And ”world”? A world means the

same thing, but considered as a whole field of relationships. Only a being that has an ability to enter into relationships, only being with an ”inside,” has a ”world”; only such a being can exist in the midst of a field of relations. There is a distinctly different kind of proximity that obtains in the relationships of pebbles, which lie together in a heap somewhere beside the roadway and are ”related” in that way, and, on the other hand, in the relationship of a plant to the nutrients which it finds in the vicinity of its roots. Here we see not merely physical proximity as an objective fact, but genuine relationship (in the original, active meaning of relationship): the nutrients are integrated into the orbit of the plant's life – by way of the real internality of the plant, through its power to be related, and to enter into relationship. And all this – all that can be taken in by the relating-power of that plant – all this makes up the field of relationships, or the world, of that plant. The plant has a world, but not the pebble.

This, then, is the first point: ”world” is a field of relations. To have a world means to be in the midst of, and to be the bearer of, a field of relations. The second point is, the higher the level of the inwardness or, that is to say, the more comprehensive and penetrative the ability to enter into relations, so the wider and deeper are the dimensions of the field of relations that belongs to that being; to put it differently: the higher a being stands in the hierarchy of reality, the wider and more profound is the standing of its world.

The lowest world is that of the plant, which does not reach beyond what it touches in its own vicinity. The higher-ranking, spatially wider realm of the animal corresponds to its greater ability to enter into relationships. The relation-ability of the animal is greater, insofar as the animal has sense-perception. To perceive something is quite extraordinary, compared with what the plant can do: it is a completely new mode of entering into relationship with one's environment.

But not everything that an animal, as such, can perceive (because it has ears to hear and eyes to see) really belongs to the world of such an animal: it is not true that all the visible things in the environment of an animal with vision are in fact seen, or even can be seen. For ”environment” as such, the perceivable environment, is still not a ”world.” That was the typical belief, until the environmental researches of the biologist Jakob von Uexküll; until that time, as Uexküll puts it, ”it was generally held, that all eye-equipped

animals could see the same things."[99] But Uexküll's discovery was that, on the contrary, "the environments of animals are not at all the whole expanse of nature, but resemble a narrow, furnished apartment."[100] For example, one could well imagine that a crow could see a grasshopper (a very desirable object for a crow) whenever the grasshopper came across its path, or to be more precise, whenever it came into view of its eyes. But that is not the case! Instead, to cite Uexküll, "the crow is completely incapable of seeing a grasshopper sitting still... we would first assume that the form of a resting grasshopper would be very well known to a crow, but because of the blade of grass in the way, it cannot be made out as a unit, just as we have difficulty seeing an image hidden in a picture-puzzle. Only when it jumps does its form release' itself from the neighboring shapes or so we would think. But after further investigation, it can be shown that the crow does not even recognize the *form* of a resting grasshopper, but is only prepared to sense *moving things*. This would explain the playing dead' behavior of many insects. Since their resting-form does not at all appear in the sense–world of their predators, they escape that world completely and securely simply by lying still, and cannot be found, even if they are actively sought."[101]

This selective milieu, then, to which the animal is completely suited, but in which the animal is also enclosed (so much so that the boundary cannot be crossed – since "not even if it looks for something" – even if equipped with an excellent searching-organ, could it find something that does not correspond to the selective principle of this partial world); this selective reality, determined and bounded by the biological life-purpose of the individual or the species, is called an "environment" [*Umwelt*] by Uexküll (in distinction from a "surrounding" [*Umgebung*], and in distinction also, as we will later see, from a "world" [*Welt*]). The field of relations of the animal is not its "surroundings," nor the "world," but is its "environment," in this special sense: a world from which something has been left out, a selected milieu, to which its dweller is at once perfectly suited and confined.

Someone will perhaps ask at this point, what has this to do with our theme, "What is it to philosophize?" Now the connection is not as distant or indirect as it may seem. We last inquired about the world of the human being, and this was the immediate interest in Uexküll's concept of environment –

namely, that our human world "can in no way claim to be more real than the sense–world of the animal" (so he says[102]); that, consequently, the human being is in principle confined to his world in the same way as the animal; that is, to a biologically selected partial environment, and that man cannot perceive anything that lies outside this environment, "not even if it was actively sought" (no more, then, than the crow could find the resting grasshopper). One might well ask how a being so enclosed in its own environment, so closed in on itself, could be able to perform scientific research on the nature of environments!

But we don't want to engage in controversy on this point; rather, we can leave the point aside and ask another question instead, since our attention is directed to man and the human world to which he belongs: what is the relating-power of the human being? What is its nature? What power does it have? We said that the perceptive-ability of the animal, when compared with what is in plants, is a more far-reaching way of relating to things. Would not, then, the peculiarly human manner of knowing – for ages past, termed a *spiritual* or *intellective* knowing – in fact be another, further mode of putting-oneself-into-relation, a mode which transcends in principle any thing which can be realized in the plant and animal worlds? And further, would this fundamentally different kind of relating power go together with a different field of relations, i.e., a world of fundamentally different dimensions? The answer to such questions can be found in the Western philosophical tradition, which has understood and even defined spiritual knowing as the power to place oneself into relation with the sum–total of existing things. And this is not meant as only one characteristic among others, but as the very essence and definition of the power. By its nature, spirit (or intellection) is not so much distinguished by its immateriality, as by something more primary: its ability to be in relation to the totality of being. "Spirit" means a relating power that is so far-reaching and comprehensive, that the field of relations to which it corresponds, transcends in principle the very boundaries of its surroundings. It is the nature of spirit to have as its field of relations not just "surroundings" [*Umwelt*] but a "world" [*Welt*]. It is of the nature of the spiritual being to go past the immediate surroundings and to go beyond both its "confinement" and its "close fit" to those surroundings (and of course

herein is revealed both the freedom and danger to which the spiritual being is naturally heir).

In Aristotle's treatise on the soul, the *De Anima*[103], we can read the following: "Now, in order to sum up every thing said up until this point about the soul, we can say again that, the soul, basically, is all that exists." This sentence became a constant point of reference for the anthropology of the High Middle Ages: *anima est quodammodo omnia* ["The soul, in a certain way, is all things"]. "In a certain way": that is to say, the soul is "all" insofar as it sets itself in relation to the whole of existence through knowing (and "to know" means to become identical with the known reality – although we cannot go into any further detail about this as yet). As Thomas says in the treatise *De Veritate* ("On Truth"), the spiritual soul is essentially structured "to encounter all being" (*convenire cum omni ente*[104]) to put itself into relation with everything that has being. "Every other being possesses only a partial participation in being," whereas the being endowed with spirit "can grasp being as a whole."[105] As long as there is spirit, "it is possible for the completeness of all being to be present in a single nature."[106] And this is also the position of the Western tradition: to have spirit [*Geist*], to be a spirit, to be spiritual – all this means to be in the middle of the sum–total of reality, to be in relation with the totality of being, to be *vis–à–vis de l'univers*. The spirit does not live in "a" world, or in "its" world, but in *the* world: world in the sense of "everything seen and unseen" (*omnia visibilia et invisibilia*).

Spirit, or intellection, and the sum–total of reality: these are interchangeable terms, that correspond to one another. You cannot "have" the one without the other. An attempt to do just this (we mention only it in passing) – to grant the human being superiority to his surroundings, to say that man has "world" [*Welt*] (and not merely "environment" [*Umwelt*]), *without* speaking of man's spiritual nature, or rather (what is more extreme), to maintain that this fact (that man has "world" and not only "environment") has nothing whatever to do with this "other" fact, that the human being is equipped with intellection or spirit – this attempt has been made by Arnold Gehlen in a very comprehensive book which has received a great deal of attention: *Man: His Nature and Place in the World*[107]. In opposition to Uexküll, Gehlen rightly says that the human being is not closed within an

environment but is free of his surroundings and open to the world; and yet, Gehlen goes on to say, this difference between the animal as environmentally limited and the human being as open to the world–as–a–whole does not depend ”on the characteristic of ... spirit.” Instead, this very power to ”have the world” *is* spirit! Spirit by definition is *ability to comprehend the world*!

For the older philosophy – that is, for Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, and Thomas – the connection of the two terms ”spirit” (or ”intellection” [*Geist*]) and ”world” (in the sense of total–relatedness) is so intimately and profoundly anchored in both directions that not only is it true to say that *”spirit is relatedness to the sum–total of existing beings”*; for the earlier philosophers, the other truth, asserting that all things are essentially in relation to spirit, is just as valid, and in a very precise sense, which we do not dare to formulate in words as yet. For not only is it the property of the spirit that its field of relations includes the sum–total of existing things; rather, it is also the property of existing things that they lie within the field of relations of the spirit. And to go further: for the older philosophy, it is all the same to say that ”things have being” as to say that ”things lie in the field of relations of the spirit, are related to spirit,” whereby is meant, of course, no mere ”free-floating” spirituality in some abstract sense but rather personal spirit, a relating power that is well grounded, but then again, not only God, but the created, finite, human spirit as well. For the old ontology, it belonged to the nature of existing things to be within the field, within the reach of the spiritual soul; ”to have being” means the same as ”to lie within the field of relations of the spiritual soul”; both statements refer to one and the same situation. This and nothing else is the meaning of the old doctrine which has become so removed from us: ”All being is true” (*omne ens est verum*), and the other doctrine with the same meaning: ”being” and ”true” are convertible expressions. For what does ”true” mean, in the sense of ”the truth of things”? To say that something is true is to say that it is understood and intelligible, both for the absolute spirit as well as for the non–absolute spirit (I need to ask for your patience in simply accepting this for the moment, since it is not possible to justify these things in any detail at this point[108]). ”Intelligibility” is nothing other than being related to a spirit that has understanding. So when the old philosophy states that it belongs to the nature of existing things, that they are intelligible and are understood, there could not be any being which is

not known and knowable (since *all* being is true); when it is said that the concepts "being" on the one hand, and "intelligibility" on the other, are convertible, so that the one could stand in the other's place, so that it is the same for me to say that "things have existence" as to say that "things are known and intelligible"; in saying this the old philosophy also taught that it lies in the nature of things to be related to the mind (and this – the concept of the "truth of things" – is what matters in the context of our present inquiry). To summarize, then, what we have been saying: the world that is related to the spiritual being is the sum–total of existing things; this is so much the case that this set of relations belongs as well to the nature of spirit; the spirit is the power of comprehending the totality of being, as it belongs to the nature of existing beings themselves: "to be" means "to be related to spirit."

What stands revealed to us, then, is a series of "worlds": at the lowest, the world of plants, already locally limited to the surroundings they touch. Beyond this is the realm of the animals; and finally, transcending all these partial worlds, is the world related to spirit, *the* world as the totality of being. And to this ranking of worlds and fields-of-relations correspond, as we have seen, the ranking of the powers that relate: the more comprehensive the power, the more highly dimensioned is the corresponding field of relations, or "world." Now a third structural element is to be added to this twofold structure. For the stronger power of relating corresponds to a higher degree of inwardness; the power to relate is greater to the same degree as the bearer of that relation has "inwardness"; the lowest power of relating not only corresponds to the lowest form of being in the world but also to the lowest grade of "inwardness," whereas the spirit, which directs its relating-power to the sum–total of being, must likewise have a corresponding inwardness. The more comprehensive the power of relating oneself to the world of objective being, so the more deeply anchored must be the "ballast" in the inwardness of the subject. And when a distinctively different level of "world" is reached, namely, the orientation toward the whole, there too can be found the highest stage of being-established in one's inwardness, which is proper to the spirit. Thus both of these comprise the nature of spirit: not only the relation to the "whole" of the world and "reality," but also the highest power of living-with-oneself, of being in oneself, of independence, of autonomy – which is exactly what has always been the "person," or "personality" in the Western tradition: to have a world, to be related to the totality of existing things – that can occur

only in a being that is ”established in itself”: not a ”what,” but a ”who” – an ”I,” a person.

But now it is time to look back over the path we have taken and return to the questions from which we began. There were two questions, one more immediate, the other more remote. The first was, ”What kind of world is the world of man?” and the second was, ”What does it mean to philosophize?”

Before we begin again with our formal discussion, a brief remark is in order about the structure of the world that is related to the spirit. It is not, of course, by a greater spatial compass that the world that is spirit-related differs from the world that is related to the non-spiritual (a point that was not addressed when I distinguished ”environment” from ”world”). It is not only the sum–total of things; but it is also the ”nature of the things,” with which the world related to the spirit is constituted. The reason *why* the animal lives in a partial world is because the nature of things is hidden from it. And it is only because the spirit is able to attain to the *essence* of things that it has the ability to understand the *totality* of things. This connection was made by the old doctrine of being, whereby ”the universe,” as well as the nature of things, is ”universal.” Thomas says, ”Because the intellectual [or spiritual] soul is able to grasp universals, it has a capacity for the infinite.”[109] Whoever attains to an understanding of the universal, whole essence of things is thereby able to win a perspective from which the totality of being, of all existing things, are present and ascertainable; in intellectual understanding, an ”outpost” is reached, or can be reached, whence the whole landscape of the universe can be taken in. We have reached a context into which we can take only a brief glimpse but which will also lead us into the very center of a philosophical understanding of being, knowing, and spirit.

But now, let us return to the questions which we set out to answer. The first step to take is to the more immediate question, ”What kind of world is the world of man?” Is the world of man the world that is related to the spirit? The answer would have to be that man’s world is the whole reality, in the midst of which the human being lives, face-to-face with the entirety of existing things – *vis-à-vis de l’univers* – but only *insofar as man is spirit*! But man is not pure spirit; he is a finite spirit so that both the nature of things and the totality of things are not given in the perfection of a total understanding,

but only in ”expectation” or ”hope.” And we will speak of this in the third lecture.

But first, let us consider the fact that man is not pure spirit. This statement, of course, could be spoken in a variety of tones. Not seldom, it is said with a feeling of regret, an accentuation that is usually understood as something specifically Christian, by both Christians and non-Christians alike. The sentence can also be said in such a way as to imply that ”certainly, man is not pure spirit,” but that the ”true human being” is nevertheless the intellectual soul. Now these doctrines have no basis in the classical tradition of the West. Thomas Aquinas used a very pointed formula on this matter which is not as well known as it should be. The objection he raises is the following: ”The goal of the human being is to attain complete likeness to God. But the soul, when separated from the body — which is immaterial, would be more like God than the soul with the body. And therefore the souls will be separated from their bodies in their final state.” This is the objection, that the real human being is the soul, dressed out in all the tempting glamor of theological argumentation. And how does Thomas reply to the objection? ”The soul that is united to the body is more like God than the soul that has been separated from its body because the former more perfectly possesses its own nature.”[110] This is no easily digested statement, considering how it implies not only that the human being is bodily, but that the soul itself is also bodily.

If this is the case, if man *essentially* is ”not only spirit,” if man is not in virtue of a denial, or on the basis of a departure from his authentic being, but really and in a positive sense a being in whom the various realms of plant-, animal-, and spiritual beings are bound into a unity – then man lives *essentially*, not exclusively, in the face of the totality of things, the whole universe of beings. Rather, his field of relations is an overlapping of ”world” and ”environment,” and necessarily so, in correspondence to human nature. Because man is not purely spirit, he cannot only live ”under the stars,” not only *vis-à-vis de l’univers*; instead, he needs a roof over his head, he needs the trusted neighborhood of daily reality, the sensuously concrete world, he needs to ”fit in” with his customary surroundings – in a word: a truly human life also needs to have an ”environment” (*Umwelt*), as distinct from a ”world.”

But at the same time, it pertains to the nature of body/soul being that man is, that the spirit shapes and penetrates the vegetative and sense-perceived regions in which he exists. So much so, that the act of eating by a human being is something different from that of the animal (even apart from the fact that the human realm includes the ”meal,” something thoroughly spiritual!). The spiritual soul so profoundly influences all the other regions that even when the human being ”vegetates,” this is only possible because of the spirit (neither the plant nor the animal ”vegetates”). Consequently, this very nonhuman phenomenon, this self-inclusion of man in the environment (and that means, in that selective world determined solely by life’s immediate needs), even this confinement is possible only on the basis of a *spiritual* confinement. On the contrary, to be human is: to know things beyond the ”roof” of the stars, to go beyond the trusted enclosures of the normal, customary day-to-day reality of the whole of existing things, to go beyond the ”environment” to the ”world” in which that environment is enclosed.

But now, we have unwittingly taken a step closer to answering our original question: What is it to philosophize? Philosophy means just this: to experience that the nearby world, determined by the immediate demands of life, can be shaken, or indeed, must be shaken, over and over again, by the unsettling call of the ”world,” or by the total reality that mirrors back the eternal natures of things. To philosophize (we have already asked, What empowers the philosophical act to transcend the working–world?) – to philosophize means to take a step outside of the work–a–day world into the *vis-à-vis de l’univers*. It is a step which leads to a kind of ”homeless”-ness: the stars are no roof over the head. It is a step, however, that constantly keeps open its own retreat, for the human being cannot live long in this way. He who seriously intends to wander finally and definitively outside the world of the Thracian maiden is wandering outside the realm of human reality. What Thomas said about the *vita contemplativa* applies here also: it is really something more than human (*non proprie humana, sed superhumana*).[111] Of course, man himself is something more than human: man transcends man himself for the sake of the eternal, Pascal said; an easy definition does not go far enough to reach the human being.

But instead of developing these considerations, which may lead us too near to babbling nonsense, let us return to the question, ”What does it mean

to philosophize?" and attempt another approach to it, in more concrete fashion, and on the basis established by the foregoing. How is the philosophical question different from the non-philosophical question? To philosophize means, we said, to direct one's view toward the totality of the world. So is *that* a philosophical question (and that alone) which has for its explicit and formal theme this sum–total of all existing things? No! What is peculiar and distinctive about a philosophical question is that it cannot be posed, considered, or answered (so far at least as an answer is possible), without "God and the World" also coming into consideration, that is, *the whole of what exists*.

Once again, let us speak quite concretely. The question, "What are we doing, here and now?" can clearly be intended in various ways. It *can* be meant philosophically. Let us attempt it, then! The question can be asked in such a way as to anticipate a technical-organizational answer. "What is happening now?" "Well, a lecture is being delivered during the Bonn Week of Higher Education." That is a straightforward, informative sentence, standing there in a clearly lit world or rather, "environment." It is an answer spoken with one's attention directed to what is immediately at hand. But the question could also be meant in another sense so that the questioner would not be content with the answer just now given. "What are we doing right now?" One person is speaking; others are listening to what he is saying, and the listeners "understand" what is being said; approximately the same process is taking place within the minds of the many listeners: the statements are grasped, thought about, weighed, accepted, denied, or accepted with some hesitation, and then integrated with each person's own fabric of thought. This question expects an answer coming from the special sciences; it can be meant so as to call on the psychology of sense perception, cognition, learning, mental states, and so on, and these sciences would provide the adequate answer. An answer of this kind, then, would exist in a world of higher and deeper dimensions than the first answer, with its merely organizational interest. But the answers of the special sciences have still not reached the horizon of total reality; this answer could be given *without* having to speak at the same time of "God and the World." But if the question, "What are we doing right now?" was meant as a *philosophical* question, such an exclusion would not be possible; for if the question is meant philosophically, then the question is about the nature of knowing, of truth, or even of the nature of teaching itself. What, in the last

analysis, is it ”to teach”? Now someone will come along and say, ”A man cannot really teach; just as when someone is healed from illness, it is not the doctor who has healed him, but nature, whose healing powers the doctor has, perhaps, allowed to operate.” Someone else will come up and say, ”It is God who really teaches, within, on the occasion of human teaching.” Then Socrates will stand up and say that the teacher only makes it possible for the one who learns ”to acquire knowledge from himself” through reminiscence; ”there is no learning, only recollection.”[112] And still another one will say, ”All human beings are confronted by the same reality; the teacher points it out, and the learner, or the listener, sees for himself.”

What are we doing here? What kind of phenomenon is taking place? Is it something of a socially organized nature, a part of a lecture series? Is it something that can be analyzed and researched in terms of psychological science? Is it something taking place between God and the World?

This, then, is what is peculiar and distinctive about a philosophical question, that something comes to the fore in it, touching the very nature of the soul: to ”come together with every being” (*convenire cum omni ente*) – with everything that exists. You cannot ask and think philosophically without allowing the totality of existing things to come into play: God and the World.

III

We said that it was the property of the human being to need to belong both to the "environment" and to be oriented toward the "world," or the totality of being; we further maintained that it was of the nature of the philosophical act to transcend the "environment" and to encounter the "world."

But this cannot mean, of course, that there are two so–to–speak divorced worlds and that man must depart from the one in order to enter the other; it is not as if there were some things which are characterized by having their place in the "surrounding environment," and other things which do not appear there at all, but only in that other place we call the "World." "Environment" and "World" [*Umwelt* and *Welt*], as we are using the terms here at least, are not two separated areas of reality so that someone who asks a philosophical question would have to remove himself from the one region and move to the other! The one who philosophizes does not turn his head in a different direction, when he transcends the work–a–day world in the philosophical act; he does not take his eye off the things of the working world – away, that is, from the concrete, purposeful, manageable items of the working day – he does not need to look in a different direction in order to behold the universal world of essences.

No, it is rather this visible world, the one before our very eyes which we touch with our hands, upon which the philosopher gazes. But this world, and all these things in it, are investigated in a peculiar way: what one inquires into, in regard to them, is their ultimate nature, and the horizon of the question becomes the horizon of the sum–total of reality. The philosophical question concerns itself precisely with "this" or "that," lying before one's eyes, and not with something "outside the world," or something "in another world," outside the world of daily experience. But the philosophical question asks, "What is this, *ultimately*, and *in the last analysis*?" As Plato says, "It is not whether I am doing an injustice to you somehow, or you are doing an injustice to me: that is not what philosophy wants to get at, but rather, what is justice or injustice in itself; not, whether a king who has a lot of money is

happy or not, but rather, just what kingship is, what happiness is, what misery is what they are as such, and in the last analysis."[113]

Philosophical questioning is entirely directed toward the day–to–day world that lies before our eyes. However, what lies before our eyes becomes all at once "transparent" to the question-asker; it loses its compactness, its apparent completeness, its self-explanatory, obvious nature. Things appear, but with a strange, unfamiliar, uncertain, *deeper* appearance. When Socrates asks questions, aware that he is suddenly taking the obviousness away from things, he compares himself to a sting-ray, whose sting makes its victims numb. People are always saying, this is "my" friend, or this is "my" wife, or "my" house, that we "have" or "own" such things. But suddenly we are startled: do we really "have" all these "possessions"? Can they really be "had"? What *is* it, as such, and in the last analysis, to "have" something?

To philosophize means to remove oneself, not from the things of the everyday world, but from the usual meanings, the accustomed evaluations of these things. And this is not motivated from some decision to think "differently" from the way most people think, but rather for the purpose of seeing everything in a new light. This is just how it is: in the everyday things (not in some separated sphere of an "essential" world, or what have you) to be able to see the deeper visage of the real so that the attention directed to the things encountered in everyday experience comes up against what is not so obvious in these things – it is exactly here, in this inner experience, that philosophy has its beginning: in the experience of *wonder*.

"Indeed, by the gods, my dear Socrates, I cannot keep from being astounded at the meaning of all this, and at times I even get dizzy," exclaims the young mathematician Theaetetus after Socrates has succeeded in taking him far enough to see and accept his own ignorance – Socrates, at once so deceptive and helpful, who could make someone so confounded, even *numb*, with wonder, by his questioning. And then, in Plato's dialogue *Theaetetus*,[114] comes the ironical answer of Socrates: "Yes, this very condition is characteristic of the philosopher; this, and nothing else, is the very beginning of philosophy." Here for the first time, in the bright morning of our history, and almost in passing, with no ceremony, is the thought first expressed, which will then become almost a commonplace through the entire history of philosophy: that philosophy begins in wonder.

And in this, that philosophy begins in wonder, lies the, so to speak, *non-bourgeois* character of philosophy; for to feel astonishment and wonder is something *non-bourgeois* (if we can be allowed, for a moment, to use this all-too-easy terminology). For what does it mean to be come *bourgeois* in the intellectual sense? More than anything else, it means that someone takes one's immediate surroundings (the world determined by the immediate purposes of life) so "tightly" and "densely," as if bearing an ultimate value, that the things of experience no longer become transparent. The greater, deeper, more real, and (at first) invisible world of essences is no longer even suspected to exist; the "wonder" is no longer there, it has no place to come from; the human being can no longer feel wonder. The commonplace mind, rendered deaf-mute, finds everything self-explanatory. But what really is self-explanatory? Is it self-explanatory, then, that we exist? Is it self-explanatory that there is such a thing as "seeing"? These are questions that someone who is locked into the daily world cannot ask; and that is so because such a person has not succeeded, as anyone whose senses (like a deaf person) are simply not functioning – has not managed even for once to forget the immediate needs of life, whereas the one who experiences *wonder* is one who, astounded by the deeper aspect of the world, cannot hear the immediate demands of life – if even for a moment, that moment when he gazes on the astounding vision of the world.

Thus the one who experiences wonder is one who realizes in an unmixed form that ancient attitude toward being, which has been called *theoria* since the time of Plato: the purely receptive stance toward reality, undisturbed by any interruption by the will (to recall what we said in the first lecture). *Theoria* can only exist to the extent that man has not become blind to the wondrous the wonderful fact that something exists. No, it is not what has "never been there before," the abnormal, the sensational, that kindles philosophical wonder the "numbing of the senses" would be a mere substitute for genuine wonder. If someone needs the "unusual" to be moved to astonishment, that person has lost the ability to respond rightly to the wondrous, the *mirandum*, of being. The hunger for the sensational, posing, as it may, in "bohemian garb," is an unmistakable sign of the loss of the true power of wonder, for a *bourgeois*-ized humanity.

To find the truly unusual and extraordinary, the real *mirandum*, *within* the usual and the ordinary, is the beginning of philosophy. And here is where,

according to Aristotle and Thomas, the philosophical act is related to the poetical: both the philosopher and the poet are concerned with ”astonishment,” with what causes it and what advances it. In regard to the poet, the seventy-year-old Goethe concluded a short poem (”Parabase”) with the following verse: *Zum Erstaunen bin ich da* (”I exist for wonder”) and the eighty-year-old Goethe said to Eckermann: ”The highest state to which humanity can aspire is wonder.”[115]

This *”non-bourgeois”* character of the philosopher and the poet – that they try to keep the ”wondrous” in such pure and strong forms – contains within it, of course, the danger of being uprooted from the work–a–day world. Being alien to the world and to life is, so to speak, the ”professional hazard” of philosophers and poets (and yet one cannot really be a philosopher or a poet ”by profession,” for one could not live that way permanently, as has already been pointed out). Wonder does not make one industrious, for to feel astonished is to be disturbed. Whoever undertakes to live under the ”astrological sign” of astonishment and wonder at ”why anything exists at all?” must be prepared to find his way back into the daily working world. Someone who is astonished at everything he encounters may forget, at times, how to handle the same things in terms of everyday life.

But it still remains true that the ability to experience wonder is one of the highest possibilities of human nature. Thomas Aquinas sees this as a proof that the human being can only be satisfied by the vision of God and, vice versa, that this orientation toward the absolute ground of the world provides the very reason why man can feel astonishment. Thomas is of the opinion that the first wonder one feels forms the first step on the path that leads to the beatific vision, the state of blessedness resulting from reaching the ultimate Cause. But that human nature is designed for nothing less, for nothing less than such an end, is proved by the ability of the human being to experience the wonder of the creation.

Now, the disturbance experienced by the one who feels wonder – the disturbance, that is, of suddenly losing, in a flash, the compact, comfortable sense of obviousness – this disturbance, I said, can uproot someone who feels it. But not only in such a way as to cause a loss of certainty in the everyday surroundings (for there is really nothing harmful about that), but in a more

dangerous way, so that he loses his footing because he is no longer a ”doer” but only a ”knower.”

Now, it is curious that in modern philosophy, especially, the aspect of the wonderful has taken on a different appearance so that the old doctrine of wonder as the beginning of philosophy has acquired the meaning, ”*Doubt* is the beginning of philosophy.” That is what Hegel said in his essay on the history of philosophy, when speaking about Socrates and his method of bringing his partner to a state of astonishment: that the state of doubt was the main point: ”This merely negative situation is the principal point.” ”Philosophy must begin with confusion, and depends on maintaining it; one must doubt everything, give up all one’s preconceptions, in order to regain it all again through the creation of a concept.”[116] In the same (basically, Cartesian) spirit is Windelband’s translation, in his famous *Introduction to Philosophy*, of the Greek *thaumazein* (”to wonder”) as ”to become confused in one’s own thinking.”[117] (In response to this ”removal of all pre-conceptions,” Chesterton coined a fitting remark: ”There is a special kind of nonsense that consists in losing everything but your mind.”)

But should the true meaning of ”wonder” really lie, in the ”uprooting” itself, in the encouragement of doubt? Should it not rather consist in making possible a new, deeper ”rootedness”? Certainly, something is ”lost” for the one who wonders (the experience is like a ”dis-illusion,” considered as fundamentally something positive: one is ”freed” from a certain ”illusion”). Certainly, for the one who experiences the astonishment that things that had seemed obvious before, have now lost their certainty and validity: it becomes quite clear that those ”obvious” things have lost their ultimate value. But the sense of wonder is nevertheless the sense that the world is a deeper, wider, more mysterious thing than appeared to the day-to-day understanding. The inner wealth of wonder is fulfilled in a sense for mystery. The inner orientation of wonder does not aim for the stirring up of doubt, but rather for the recognition that being as being is incomprehensible and full of mystery: that being itself is a mystery, a mystery in the real meaning of the word: not merely disorientation, or irrationality, or even darkness. *Mystery* implies much more: that a reality is incomprehensible *for this reason*, that the light that it sheds is unfathomable, unquenchable, inexhaustible. This is what the one who feels wonder really feels.

It should now be clear that "wonder" and philosophizing are connected with each other in a more essential sense than may at first appear in the statement, "Philosophy begins in wonder." For wonder is not merely the beginning, in the sense of *initium*, the first stage or phase of philosophy. Rather, wonder is the beginning in the sense of the "principle" (*principium*), the abiding, ever-intrinsic origin of philosophizing. It is not true to say that the philosopher, insofar as he philosophizes, ever "emerges from his wonder" – if he *does* depart from his state of wonder, he has ceased to philosophize. The inner form of philosophizing is identical with the inner form of "being astounded." Therefore, since we posed the question to ourselves, "What is it to philosophize?" we must take a closer look at the inner form of "being astounded."

In wonder, there is something negative and something positive. The negative aspect is that the person who feels wonder does not know something, does not grasp something – he does not know, "What is behind it all"; as Thomas put it, "The cause of our wonder is hidden to us."[118] He who feels wonder, does not know, or does not know completely, does not comprehend. He who knows, does not feel wonder. It could not be said that God experiences wonder, for God knows in the most absolute and perfect way. And, further: the one who wonders not only does not know, he is intimately sure that he does not know, and he understands himself as being in a position of not-knowing. But this un-knowing is not the kind that brings resignation. The one who wonders is one who sets out on a journey, and this journey goes along with the wonder: not only that he stops short for a moment, and is silent, but also that he persists in searching. Wonder is defined by Thomas in the *Summa Theologiae*[119], as the *desiderium sciendi*, the desire for knowledge, active longing to know.

But along with *not-knowing*, and *not-giving-up*, wonder is also... joy, as Aristotle said,[120] and the Middle Ages agreed with him: *omnia admirabilia sunt delectabilia*[121] – the source of joy and the source of wonder are the same thing. One might even venture to say that wherever spiritual joy is to be met with, the wonderful is also there, and wherever there is a capacity to feel joy, there is also a capacity to feel wonder. The joy of one who is astounded is the

joy of a soul that is beginning something, of a soul that is always ready and alert for something new, for something unheard of.

In this juncture of *Yes* and *No* is revealed the "built-in" *hopefulness* of wonder, the very structure of hope, which is peculiar to the philosopher and to human existence in general. We are essentially *viatores*, travelers, pilgrims, "on the way," we are "not-yet" there. Who can say that he possesses all the being that is meant for him! "We *are* not, but we *hope to be*," as Pascal wrote.[122] And in this, that wonder also has the structure of hope built into it, can be seen how much it is a part of human nature. Ancient philosophy understood wonder as in fact the distinguishing feature of human existence. Absolute spirit does not experience wonder because the negative does not enter, because in God there is no ignorance. Only the one who cannot grasp something can feel wonder. The animal also cannot feel wonder because, as Thomas Aquinas says, "it is not a property of the sense-perceiving soul to feel distress about the understanding of causes."[123] In the case of an animal, what is positive in the structure of hope does not come into play: the orientation to knowing. Only he can feel wonder who does "not yet" know. Indeed, the ancients considered wonder so distinctively human that in the Christological controversies there was an "argument from wonder," to show that Christ was truly human. Arius denied the divinity of Christ, and against this view, Apollinaris maintained the Eternal Logos had taken the place of the spiritual soul in Christ and was directly joined to his body (of course, our concern here is not with the theological issue as such – it is simply that in such theological contexts, we can discern the ancient doctrines of being, spoken "under oath" as it were!).

Now Thomas Aquinas, in turn, used the "argument from wonder," along with other arguments, against this position of Apollinaris, according to which Christ would not have had a fully human, body–soul nature. Thomas wrote: In the Scriptures (Luke 7,9) it is said that Christ felt wonder (in the story of the centurion from Capernaum, the centurion said, "Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof," and then it is written that "Jesus heard this and was astounded" [*ἐθαύμασεν*, or *ethaumasen*]. But if Jesus could be astounded, then, there must have been something in Him, "apart from the Divine logos and the sense-perceiving soul" (both of which are incapable of feeling wonder) by means of which He was able to feel wonder,

and this is the *mens humana*, the human spiritual soul.[124] Only a spiritual knowing-power, which does not understand everything at once, to which everything is not immediately apparent, is capable of making the surrounding, sense–perceptible world of reality gradually more and more transparent, so more and more depths of reality are revealed... to the astonishment of the knower!

But the philosopher also possesses this distinctively human capacity. ”None of the gods philosophizes,” Plato has Diotima say in the *Symposium*: ”nor do fools; for that is what is so bad about ignorance – that you think you know enough.” ”Who, then, O Diotima, I asked, are the philosophers, since they are neither those who know nor those who don’t know?” Then she answered me: ”It’s so obvious, Socrates, that a child could understand: the philosophers are the ones *in between*.”[125] This ”in-between” is the realm of the truly human. It is truly human, on the one hand, not to understand (as God), and on the other hand, not to become hardened; not to include oneself in the supposedly completely illuminated world of day–to–day life; not to let oneself stay in ignorance; not to lose that childlike, flowing looseness, which only the hopeful person has.

Thus the one who does philosophy, like the one who feels wonder, is superior to the confused confinement of dullness – he has hope! But he is still *inferior* to one who finally knows, who understands. But he is hopeful, he feels wonder, he ... philosophizes.

Now this structure of hope (among other things) is also what distinguishes philosophy from the special sciences. There is a relationship with the object that is different in principle in the two cases. The question of the special sciences is in principle ultimately answerable, or, at least, it is not un-answerable. It can be said, in a final way (or some day, one will be able to say in a final way) what is the cause, say, of this particular infectious disease. It is in principle possible that one day someone will say, ”It is now scientifically proven that such and such is the case, and no otherwise.” But when it comes to a philosophical question – (”What does it mean to say ultimately’?” ”What is a disease?” ”What is it to know something?” ”What is the human being?”) – a philosophical question can never be finally, conclusively answered. ”No philosopher has ever been able completely to

know the essence of even a single fly." That was said by Thomas Aquinas[126] (who, of course, also said that "the knowing soul penetrates to the essence of things").[127] The object of philosophy is given to the philosopher on the basis of a hope. This is where Dilthey's words make sense: "The demands on the philosophizing person cannot be satisfied. A physicist is an agreeable entity, useful for himself and others; a philosopher, like the saint, only exists as an ideal."[128] It is in the nature of the special sciences to emerge from a state of wonder to the extent that they reach "results." But the philosopher does not emerge from wonder.

Here is at once the limit and the measure of science, as well as the great value, and great doubtfulness, of philosophy. Certainly, in itself it is a "greater" thing to dwell "under the stars." But man is not made to live "out there" permanently! Certainly, it is a more valuable question, as such, to ask about the whole world and the ultimate nature of things. But the answer is not as easily forthcoming as for the special sciences!

Now, the negative aspect of this structure of hopefulness is something that has become associated with the very idea of philosophizing from its very start. Ever since it began, philosophy has never been understood as a special, superior form of knowing, but rather, as a form of knowing one's own's limits. The words "philosophy" and "philosopher" were coined, according to legend, by Pythagoras. And they were intended to stand in an emphatic contrast with *"sophia"* and *"sophos"*: no man is wise and knowing, only God. And so the most that man can do is call someone a loving searcher of the truth, *philo–sophos*. In just this way, Plato in the dialogue *Phaedrus*[129] proposes the question, what to call Solon and what to call Homer, and Socrates decides the matter as follows: "To call him wise, O Phaedrus, seems going too far, something that only really applies to a god; but to call him a *philosopher*, or *lover of wisdom*, or something of that sort – *that* seems more fitting."

These stories are well known. But we tend to take them as something anecdotal, something that belongs to the art of rhetoric. Nevertheless, it seems to me reason enough to be very precise here and to take the words seriously, in their original meaning.

And what, exactly, is being said? Two things. First, that we do not ”have” the knowledge to which philosophy aspires; and second, that we do not just ”happen” not to have it, or only ”provisionally” do not have it; rather we *cannot* have it, in principle. We are in the presence here of an eternal *not–yet*.

The quest for essence really implies a claim on comprehension. And comprehension (as Thomas says) is to know something in such a way as it is possible for it be known. It is to transform all ”knowability” into the known, to know something through and through, ”completely.”[130] But there is nothing that the human being can know in this way or comprehend in this strict sense. So it is of the nature of the quest for essence, that is, of the philosophical question (insofar as it can be formulated by a human being), that it cannot be answered in the same way it is asked. It is a property of philosophy that it reaches toward a wisdom that nevertheless remains unreachable by it; but this is not to say that there is no relationship at all between the question and the answer. This wisdom is the object of philosophy but as something lovingly sought, not as something ”possessed.” This, then, is the first point that is made by the Pythagorean and Socratic-Platonic interpretation of the word *philosophia*. This point is then taken up and further refined in the *Metaphysics* of Aristotle. It was also adopted by the great thinkers of the Middle Ages, partly through Aristotle. For example, in the commentary written by Thomas Aquinas on this passage of the *Metaphysics* of Aristotle can be found some remarkable and quite penetrating variations on the theme: such as, that wisdom, because it is sought for its own sake, cannot become the full possession of any man. The results of the special sciences we can completely ”have” and ”possess”; but it belongs to the nature of these results that they are ”means”: they can never be so satisfying to us that we would seek them out fully for their own sakes. But what can satisfy us can also be sought for its own sake, and even that is only given on the basis of a hope: ”Only that wisdom is sought for its own sake (says Thomas) which does not come to man as a possession; much more so, would this lovingly sought-for wisdom be such as to be granted to man as a loan (*aliquid mutuatum*).[131]

It therefore belongs to the nature of philosophy that it only ”has” its object in the manner of a loving search. And something quite important is implied by this: something controversial, in fact. For example, Hegel appears

to have expressly opposed this definition of philosophy, in the preface to his *Phenomenology of Spirit*, where he writes, "What I have intended is to labor to arrive at the goal of being able to remove philosophy's name of love of knowing' and have real knowing instead." With this, a claim was formulated that goes in principle beyond all human possibility: a claim which led Goethe to speak in an ironic manner about Hegel and other philosophers of his day as "these gentlemen who believe they can control God, the soul, and the world (and all the other things nobody can understand)."[132]

But there is yet a second teaching in that ancient name "philosophy," which is only rarely expressed. Not only in the legendary statements of Pythagoras, but also in Plato's *Phaedrus* and in Aristotle, the *human* philosopher is contrasted with the *divine* wise man. Philosophy, that is, is not a loving search of the human being for "just any" wisdom but is oriented toward the wisdom that God has. Aristotle even calls philosophy a "divine wisdom" because it seeks to attain a knowledge such as God alone would be able fully to possess.[133]

This second doctrine, contained in the original definition of philosophy, has several aspects. First, it brings more sharply into focus the first doctrine (that philosophy cannot fully attain its object); the boundary set here is more specific than the boundary between man and God: man can possess that wisdom only to the extent that he can cease to be man. Further, it belongs to the very concept of philosophy to include an orientation to theology. An openness to theology instated here, in philosophy's earliest definition. Something, in other words, is being said that is thoroughly opposed by the meaning of philosophy that has gained currency in more recent times. This new concept of philosophy says that its peculiar characteristic is to be *distinguished* from theology, belief, and tradition. And yet a third point is made clear by the ancient word "philosophy": the refusal of philosophy to take itself for a doctrine of salvation.

But what, now, is meant by speaking of "wisdom, such as God would possess"? The understanding of wisdom that lies at the basis of this is as follows: "That one is really wise, who knows the ultimate cause"[134] ("cause" being meant here not only in the sense of efficient cause but also in the sense of final cause, or purpose). Now, to know "the ultimate cause" – not the

cause of something definite or specific but ”in general,” to know the ultimate cause of the sum–total of all things – this means to know the why and the wherefore, the origin and goal, the basic structure and foundation, the meaning and the systematic order of reality as a whole, to know the ”world” in its ultimate sense. Such a knowledge, however, in the sense of a comprehensive knowledge, could only be said to belong to the absolute spirit, or God. Only God understands the world ”from a single point of view”; that is, by itself and in terms of its one, final cause. ”He alone is wise, who knows the highest cause” – in such a sense, God alone is meant.

So this is the goal, to which philosophy is directed: understanding of reality in terms of an ultimate principle of unity. But it is of the nature of philosophy, of course, to be only ”on the way” (loving, searching, hoping) to this goal, and yet, it is in principle incapable of reaching this goal. Both aspects belong to the concept of philosophy, as understood and explicated by antiquity.

With this, the crucial point is made: it is impossible, working within the concept of philosophy, and in a philosophical manner, to reach a rational interpretation of the world from knowledge of the ”highest cause.” It means that there is no such thing as a ”closed system” of philosophy. A claim to have ”a formula for the world” is by definition ”un-philosophy” or ”pseudo–philosophy”!

And nevertheless, Aristotle[135] saw in philosophy, and in metaphysics in particular, the highest of the sciences, precisely because of this goal (to know the ultimate cause), even if it is only reachable in hope and as something given ”on loan” to man. In his *Commentary on the Metaphysics*, Thomas adds: ”This little, that can be reached by it [i.e., by metaphysics] is more important than anything else that can otherwise be known by science.”[136]

And so it is just in this twofold, two-layered structure of philosophy – in the fact that we travel a road which nevertheless has no end – in the fact that philosophy has a built-in structure of hope – precisely herein is philosophy shown to be something completely human – and indeed, in a certain sense, as the fulfillment of human existence itself.

IV

In the philosophical act, the human being's *related-ness* to the totality of being is realized; philosophy is oriented toward the world as a whole. This is what we maintained. And yet, *prior* to all philosophy, always preliminary to it, an interpretation of reality has "already" been given "a long time before." And this is an interpretation of reality, a tradition (by way of teaching and historical development) that grasps the *whole* of the world and speaks of that whole.

Man is "already" within a religious teaching tradition which offers a picture of the world as a whole. And it is of the essence of such a tradition to be there "already," to have its validity prior to all philosophy, to all interpretation of the world that builds upon experience.

There is a theological doctrine which is derived from this archaic tradition and this "primeval" revelation; in other words, a communication that took place at the beginning of human history, an "unveiling" [re-velatio, from *velum*, veil] of the meaning of the world, and of the meaning of human history as a whole; an announcement, rather overgrown and corroded with decay, but which lives again in popular myths and folkways. We cannot speak about this in any further detail at present.

For the present context, it is important to observe that the great founders of Western philosophy, upon whose achievements philosophy today still depends for its life, above all, Plato and Aristotle, not only discovered and confirmed the existence of such an "already given" view of the world, they also philosophized about it. "The ancients knew the truth; if we could only find it, why would we have to investigate the opinions of men?" So wrote Plato.[137] And how often, otherwise, does he say that this or that doctrine "is handed down by the ancients" and is not only an honorable teaching but is true in an extraordinarily unquestionable way: "As the old teaching says, God holds the beginning, middle and end of all things, and guides them according to what is best according to their nature," wrote the aged Plato in the *Laws*.[138] And it is the same with Aristotle: "It has been handed down to us, the later generations, by our very ancient forefathers, that the whole of nature is surrounded by the divine" – so reads the *Metaphysics*.[139]

It is important to see this: to see that the great, paradigmatic figures of Western philosophy were "believers" in a previously given, previously handed-down interpretation of the world. Afterwards, modern historians of philosophy, dominated by the rationalist's faith in progress, have located the beginning of philosophy in the *departure* of thinkers from tradition: philosophy is founded on the "coming-of-age" of reason, in rebellion against tradition; and above all, the denial of *religious* tradition is supposed to be of the essence of philosophy: the pre-Socratic, and pre-Athenian philosophers are understood as "Enlightened" thinkers – whereas, the most recent scholarship has spoken for the probability that the Homeric version of the gods (against which the Pre-Socratics from Thales to Empedocles opposed their own teachings), that this "Homeric" theology was in fact a kind of "Enlightenment theology," which the Pre-Socratic philosophers wanted to replace with a more ancient, restored, "pre–Homeric" theology.

So, then, what the history of philosophy reveals – both at the beginning and during the first great flowering of Western philosophy (i.e., with Socrates, Plato and Aristotle – a flowering that will never be repeated) – is this: that a previously handed-down interpretation of the world stands before all philosophizing, as a kind of doctrine "always already" spoken, from which philosophy gets a spark.

And Plato goes still farther. Not only does he say that there is a tradition handed down by the "ancients," which the philosopher must respect; Plato is also convinced, that this "wisdom of the ancients" was ultimately of divine origin, "It is a gift of the gods, which, as it seems to me, came down to us, thanks to some unknown Prometheus, along with shining fire, and the ancients, who were better than we are, and who lived closer to the Gods, handed down to us this revelation [this "report" or "spoken word," *φήμη* or *phéme*]." This is from the *Philebus*, made with reference to the doctrine of the Ideas.[140]

According to the teaching of Plato, then, "a wisdom, such as God has," has become available to us, *before* our loving search for this very wisdom – in other words, before philosophy itself. Without the contrast with this strangely illuminating gift, proffered to mankind by the gods, before any human effort of thinking was accomplished – without such an implied contrast, philosophy as a loving search for the "wisdom, such as God has" is simply unthinkable,

and yet precisely herein can be seen a justification of philosophy's autonomy as well. The autonomy of philosophy with respect to the "always already" given fund of tradition that results from divine revelation consists in the fact that the philosophical act begins with the investigation of the visible, concrete world of experience lying before one's eyes; that philosophy begins "from below," in questioning the experience of things encountered every day, a questioning which opens up ever newer, more "astounding" depths to the one who searches. And in contrast, it is the property of the "always already," previously given tradition, to *precede* all experience and all rational investigation of experience; it is its nature not an "accomplishment" won "from below" but is rather "given" beforehand, already formulated, and revealed.

What we are dealing with, now, is the basic relationship between philosophy and theology — with theology being understood in a general sense as interpretation of the fund of revelation. If someone wants, then (and if this is a simplification, I believe it a permissible one) to sum up in a few principles the essential relationship between philosophy and theology as Plato and ancient philosophy as a whole understood it, one could say something like this: theology "always already" precedes philosophy, and not only in the chronological sense, but also in the sense of an inner, original relationship; a previously given interpretation of the world that sees the world as a whole, out of which philosophical questions spring forth; philosophy, then, is essentially bound up with theology; no philosophy is in existence which does not receive its first impulse and impetus from some previously existing, uncritically accepted interpretation of the world. In the theological realm, the paradigm of a "wisdom, such as God possesses," independent of all experience, would be conceivable, from which the loving-searching movement of philosophical questioning takes its momentum and finds its orientation.

Now this is not to imply that theology really "has" what philosophy "wants." The theologian has what he has as a theologian, as the custodian and expounder of the fund of revelation, but not the genuine philosopher's knowledge of being. Certainly, the revealed Word as the *logos*, through which all things were made, is exactly a statement about the structure of reality as a whole; but the theologian, whose business it is to make clear, to preserve, to defend the meaning of this Word on the basis of the whole fund of traditional

truth – the theologian does not possess the wisdom of the philosopher, which accrues to the latter "from below." On the other hand, the philosopher, in his questioning of things, is able on his own part to reach a knowledge by the light of such a Word, that would otherwise remain hidden to him — and yet his knowing is not a theological way of knowing, but a philosophical one, that is demonstrated *in* things themselves.

The hallmark of Platonic philosophy is its openness to theology. Plato would have stared in puzzlement if someone had pointed out to him that he had overstepped the bounds of "pure" philosophical thinking by passing over into the field of theology... such as when, in the *Symposium*[141] he lets Aristophanes tell that tale – that almost grotesque farce – in which the first human beings were shaped like spheres, with four arms and legs, and being of both sexes at once, then were later split into two halves ("as one slices pears, to put them up for canning"), with each half then seeking its "lost half"; and this is love (*eros*): "the desiring and hunting for wholeness." And yet, behind all the comic details of the story, the following basic narrative can be made out: previously, at the very beginning, our nature was whole and sound; but man was driven by his *hubris*[142], by the consciousness of his own power and "great thoughts," to aspire to the level of the gods; and as punishment for this over-reaching wish to be as the gods, man lost his original wholeness; there was left only the hope, that eros (which is the desire to return to the original and "whole" state of being) would really find this fulfillment "if we revere the gods." Of course, this is not "philosophy"; of course, this could not be logically thought out as a conclusion, attained through reasoning on the basis of real experience! However, is it not really here, in the asking of the question, "What is love, anyway, in the last analysis?" and (along with that) in the consideration of an answer coming from a religious tradition – does not this binding-together of philosophy and theology give the Platonic dialogue that special element, which lets us experience it as something so pertinent to our human life? At the same time, is not this also the very source of the dialogue's power to completely transcend the sphere of human existence itself?

It would be impossible, then, to try to pursue a philosophy that is radically and consciously opposed to theology, and call on Plato to justify such an undertaking! If you want to philosophize in a Platonic way and with

Platonic aspirations, you must philosophize before a theological backdrop. If one is seriously inquiring into the roots of things (which is what happens in the philosophical act), then one cannot, at one and the same time, reject (for the sake of some kind of "methodological purity") that previously given religious tradition and its teaching, which concerns expressly the very roots of things – even if you no longer accept that teaching! And yet, to accept it, to "believe" in it, *and* at the same time, in your philosophizing, to reject it – *that* is what someone cannot do in any seriousness.

And now, the question naturally arises, where is to be found, today, this authentic pre–philosophical tradition. What is the contemporary form of knowledge "given to us," as Plato said,[143] "as a gift of the gods, by some unknown Prometheus"? To this, one can only answer: since the fall of the Roman Empire, there has not been any pre–philosophical tradition *apart from* the Christian tradition. In the Western world, there is no theology but the Christian. Where is a non–Christian theology to be found, in the full sense of the word?[144]

This means, that, if one intends to philosophize in such a way as to satisfy the claims for philosophy Plato made, in the Christian era, one can only do this before the backdrop of the Christian interpretation of life. "How is Christian philosophy possible?" – this question appears less difficult to answer than another question, "How is a non-Christian philosophy possible?" – so long as it is assumed that we are understanding philosophy to be what Plato understood it to be.

Of course, it should not be said that it is enough to be a Christian, or to accept the Christian revelation as true, in order to realize philosophy in the larger sense – that is, as a questioning of the world, a penetration into being, a path followed "from below," all accompanied by a natural, genial attitude toward the world – no, it cannot be said that *only* Christian philosophy can be a living philosophy. Philosophy can also live in "opposition" to the Christian view. Then, of course, one opposes Christianity through a set of "articles of belief" – even though these articles may appear to be fully "rational," Rationalism still has its own articles of faith – and then the authentic structure of philosophy is still present, as a certain response to a set of beliefs (where the religious tradition is *completely* atrophied so that one can no

longer know the meaning of the words ”god,” ”revelation,” ”logos,” only then would philosophy no longer live and grow).

Philosophy gets its life and inward stimulus from its counterpoint relationship with theology. That is where it gets its spice, its existential ”salt.” And it was just because of this decline — that, once philosophy shrank to a specialized academic discipline, it became so ”flat” as to avoid with anxiety any contact with theological themes (which could also be said, in part, for so-called ”Christian philosophy”) – and this is probably why the philosophy of Heidegger had such a stirring, dazzling effect. Its explosive character consisted in nothing other than the radical way it posed questions of theological origin (which demanded theological answers), while radically denying the very possibility of such answers. Suddenly the taste of theology was traced on the tongue! And in France today, apart from what is merely fashionable, the situation is similar: this ”existential” atheism is by no means a ”purely philosophical” or even ”scientific” position, but is *theological* in nature, and that is why it lends philosophy a certain theological dimension. This philosophy, however, as a pseudo–theology or even an anti–theology, is no closer to the truth, but is at least more ”alive.” It is truly relevant to the human person, because it deals with the All, with which philosophy by definition has to deal. So that, if Jean-Paul Sartre says, ”Atheistic existentialism concludes from the non–existence of God that there is a being that exists without being determined by any higher will, and that being is man...,” nobody would take this for a philosophical thesis rather than a theological one, for an article of faith. And yet such a statement almost forces thought to the level of theology! And in relation to that opposing ”pole,” philosophy can live again.

Of course, a living philosophy that is also *true* would only be possible in counterpoint with a true theology, and after the birth of Christ, that means with a Christian theology. But, again: it is not as if all actual philosophy that calls upon Christian theology is able, just with that, to realize such a unity of *truth* and *life*. Instead, a philosophy that is both living and true will either not be realized at all (and it is quite possible that we will wait in vain for it to come), or if it is realized, then it will only be as a ”Christian philosophy” in that sense.

And this is no longer a ”purely” philosophical statement. But it is of the nature of philosophy, which has been understood from its beginning as a

loving search for ”wisdom, such as God possesses” – it is, by the nature of the philosophical act, unavoidable for one who philosophizes to pass over to the realm of theology – a realm that is theoretically and methodically, but not existentially, separate and distinct; a field that is conceptually, but not really distinct – and take up a theological position. For otherwise, one cannot philosophize! And this is so because philosophy, as a basic human attitude toward reality, is only possible on the basis of the totality of human existence, to which belong its ultimate positions, as well as its first principles!

A few remarks need to be made on the concept ”Christian philosophy” as a conclusion to our efforts to answer the question, ”What does it mean to do philosophy?” At the same time, I do not want to raise the expectation that this many-sided problem of Christian philosophy will be exhaustively treated, or even illuminated in its essential features.

To begin with, it is necessary to counter a current opinion, which holds that Christian philosophy (or: *any* Christian philosophy would be distinguished from a non-Christian one by the Christian philosophy having simple answers to problems. This is not the case. Even though Christian philosophy thinks with reference to completely undoubted certainties; nevertheless, it is still true that Christian philosophy can more purely realize the true sense of philosophical wonder, or astonishment, which is based on *not-knowing*. One of the greatest of those thinkers in our day, who have taken Thomas Aquinas as a guide, has said that the characteristic mark of Christian philosophy is not that it has easy solutions at its disposal, but rather that it possesses the *sense of mystery* to a higher degree than any other philosophy.”[145] And even in the realm of faith and theology (despite all the certainty faith brings), it is by no means true to say that everything becomes ”clear” for the believing person, that every problem is solved. Indeed, as Matthias Joseph Scheeben said, the truths of Christianity are inconceivable in a very peculiar way; inconceivable too, of course, are the very truths of reason, but what is distinctive about the truths of Christendom are that, ”despite the revelation, they remain hidden nevertheless.”[146]

Now, one may ask, How could a Christian philosophy have something over a non-Christian philosophy, if it does not reach to a higher level of solutions, if it cannot get handy answers, if the problems and questions are still there? Well, perhaps a *greater truth* could be present in its ability to see

the world in its truly mysterious character, in its inexhaustability. It could even be the case that here, in the very experience of being as a mystery, that it is not to be grasped in the hand as a "well-rounded truth" – herein is reality more deeply and truly grasped than in any transparent system that may charm the mind of the student with its clarity and simplicity. And this is the claim of Christian philosophy: to be *truer*, precisely because of its recognition of the mysterious character of the world.

In no way, then, does philosophy become easier. Plato appears to have discovered and felt that too – if a certain interpretation of Plato is correct,[147] maintaining that Plato understood philosophy to be something tragic *for this reason*, that it must constantly have recourse to *mythos*, since the teaching of philosophy can never close itself into a system.

Nor is Christian philosophy "easier" for thinkers, as one may be inclined to think, because faith "illuminates" reason. No, the explicit reference to theological arguments (in the philosophy of Thomas Aquinas, for example) is not for the purpose of getting answers more easily, but rather for the purpose of breaking through the methodical narrowness of "pure" philosophizing, to give rein to the real *philosophical* impulse, the loving search for wisdom, to open and broaden a space for mystery – a space which, by definition, is characterized by being "without borders" so that one can go into the infinite without being "finished." On the other hand, the rationale for these theological truths about the world as a whole, and about the meaning of human existence, is a "saving" function of theology, that it provides a "No!" to the soul that naturally pushes forward to clarity, transparency, and systematic closure (and this is the meaning of the famous saying that the truth of faith is the "negative norm" for philosophical thinking).

But this would not make philosophy any "easier"! On the contrary, it is "thought" to be precisely the opposite, and how could one otherwise expect, than that Christian philosophy would be more difficult for a thinker than a philosophy that would not feel itself bound to traditional truths of faith? In Hölderlin's *Hyperion* are the following lines:

The heart's wave would never have splashed and frothed so beautifully, and become Spirit –

Had not the grim, old cliff of Destiny stubbornly opposed...

It is the old, silent, unyielding, irrevocable ”cliff” of revealed truth that hinders philosophical thinking from flowing into a smooth, well-channeled stream. It is through the complication of thought that arises from this opposition, wherein Christian philosophy differs from the non-Christian. It is a kind of philosophy of history, which must deal with the coming of the Antichrist at the end-point, and that means, with accepting that human history, in human terms, must end in a catastrophe – such a philosophy of history, which nevertheless does not become a philosophy of despair – such a *Christian* philosophy of history cannot possibly turn into a simple historical schema, whereas the philosophy of progress (to be sure, it is revealing how little one speaks of it any more!) is a simpler philosophy because it refuses to see any ”apocalypse”! But philosophy does not become simpler by embracing the norm of Christian revelation. Instead – and this is an obvious claim on the part of a Christian – it becomes truer, more faithful to reality. What revealed truth brings to philosophical thinking is a creative and fruitful opposition. Christian philosophy sets a higher task for itself. Christian philosophizing differs, by having to withstand a force exceeding the realm of mere rational difficulties. Christian philosophy is more complicated because it does not permit itself to arrive at ”illuminating” formulations through ignoring, selecting, or dropping certain areas of reality; and this is because, placed in a fruitful state of unease through its glimpse of revealed truth, it is compelled to think more spaciously and, above all, not to be content with the superficiality of any rationalistic harmony. Christian philosophy is different because of this splashing and foaming of the soul’s breakers against the cliff of the divine Truth.

By its fidelity to the counterpoint of Christ’s truth, Christian philosophizing gains an enrichment of its content. And it must be understood, of course, that not only its Christian character is thereby made stronger and more authentic, but its philosophical character as well (this needs to be repeated over and over because it is not at all obvious!). A famous book on the history of medieval philosophy by Maurice de Wulf closes with this sentence: ”Scholasticism collapsed, not from a lack of ideas, but from a lack of brains!”

And so, the ”No” of theology, as a *norma negativa* opposed to philosophical thinking, is anything but ”negative.” For someone would not consider something negative that hinders thinking from falling into certain

errors. It is really something positive for the human mind to be strengthened through its believing acceptance of revealed truth, to accept in a much more certain way certain philosophical truths, which "in themselves" are attainable by reason in a natural way. "A state without justice is nothing other than a giant den of thieves." This statement is naturally intelligible, but it is *not* by chance that it is not to be found in a textbook of legal philosophy, but in a theological work, the *City of God*, by Saint Augustine.

Now, one can also pose the question, Is not philosophy superfluous for the Christian? Wouldn't theology be enough, or faith alone? In his *Introduction to Philosophy*, Windelband wrote, "He who already has a world–view, and is determined to continue to hold to his belief in all circumstances [and this would in fact be true of the genuine Christian], has no personal need whatsoever for philosophy." In fact, for *salvation*, philosophy is not necessary; only one thing is needful, and that one thing is not philosophy. The Christian cannot expect from philosophy an answer to the question about human salvation, or even about salvation itself. He cannot philosophize in order to satisfy such expectations; he cannot philosophize in such a way as if his salvation depended on research into the structure of the universe. To "lose oneself" in problems (for this is the mark of a philosophy that is completely self-dependent, and all the more so, the more seriously it is taken), this so-called "existential" identification with the problems of thought is foreign to the believer. In Thomas Aquinas you can see a certain cheerfulness about "not–being–able– to–understand," an attitude very closely related to a sense of humor. Philosophy is just as necessary, and just as superfluous, as the natural fulfillment of the human being is necessary or (even) unnecessary. **To do philosophy is to realize the naturally essential inclination of the human mind toward totality.** Who would want to determine (in a concrete fashion) the degree of necessity that is present, for this *potentia*, this essential capacity, to find its natural realization?

One last point remains. Hitherto, we have spoken as if the "Christian" was exclusively, or at least predominantly, a matter of teaching, doctrinal propositions, and truth. And we have spoken of a "Christian philosopher" in a similar fashion, in the way one is accustomed to speak of a "Kantian philosopher," whereby is meant someone whose philosophical opinions are in agreement with the teaching of Kant. But when it is said that someone is a Christian in his philosophy, that cannot only mean that his view of the world

is in agreement with Christian teaching. For Christianity is a reality, and not just a teaching! The problem of a Christian philosophy is not only to figure out whether, and in what manner, natural knowledge of the world can be joined in theory to supernatural faith; rather, what it concerns is whether, and in what manner, the philosophizing of someone who roots his thinking in Christian reality can become a truly Christian philosophizing.

It was Fichte who said, "The kind of philosophy a man chooses depends on the kind of man he is " – which is not so happy a saying because it is not as if one simply "chooses" a philosophy! Even so, the point is clear and appropriate. For even in the realm of the natural sciences, it is not the case that one simply needs to apply his brain with more or less energy in order to arrive at a certain truth; and this is true above all, if the truth in question concerns the meaning of the universe and life itself; and then, it is not enough merely to be "bright": you also have to have certain qualities as a human being and as a person. Now Christianity is a reality that will form and mold the person the more completely in all his abilities, the more he opens himself up to it. But this is not the time, nor is it my present task, to speak in any more detail about such matters. What I have said may be enough to suffice, to indicate the existential structure of Christian philosophy.

St. Thomas[148] employs a distinction, which would seem to be a very modern one, between two ways of knowing: between purely theoretical knowing (*per cognitionem*), on the one hand, and knowing on the basis of an essential related-ness (*per connaturalitatem*), on the other. In the first way, one knows something that does not belong to one; in the second way, one knows what is peculiar to oneself. In the first way, a moralist or ethical philosopher can judge what is good without himself necessarily being a good human being; in the second way, *per connaturalitatem*, the good man knows what is good on the basis of his immediate sharing and partaking of it, on the basis of an inner correspondence, thanks to the unerring sense of someone who loves (for love is that whereby the foreign becomes one's own, whereby *connaturalitas* comes into being, as Thomas also says!).[149] And that person may judge of divine things on the basis of an essential related-ness, as if he were judging what is personally his own; who, according to Dionysius the Areopagite, is not only "*learning* the divine, but *suffering* it as well."[150]

In this way, then, that person will realize in his philosophizing the complete form of Christian philosophy, who not only ”learns” and knows what is Christian, for whom it is not merely a ”doctrine,” to which he can coordinate his conclusions in some purely conceptual union, some theoretical unity or harmony; rather, the Christian philosopher is one who allows the Christian faith to be real in himself; on the basis of this essential related-ness, then, and not merely knowing and learning, but ”suffering” and experiencing reality, will he win Christian truth for his own and go on to philosophize about the natural principles of the world’s reality and the meaning of human life.

Part III
Appendix

Appendix
A Retrospective of Reviews from the First English Edition

Times Literary Supplement

The philosophy taught in universities was never perhaps more remote from the experiences and preoccupations of ordinary life than it is in England to-day. In *The Philosophical Predicament*, Professor Winston Barnes, for example, has shown that English philosophy is not unconscious of being at odds with itself. But there is as well the world of men and women. Notwithstanding the recent abatement of extreme poverty and the recent multiplication of means of popular entertainment, the general mood, whether in town or country, cannot be called happy. Notwithstanding a superficial cheeriness, a generous give and take, there is restlessness and fret, and they seem to betoken an underlying emptiness which borders on despair. But that this has anything to do with philosophy, or with the teaching of philosophy, is a suggestion which to many ears will sound preposterous. That, too, the trouble is primarily one of education may be regarded as paradoxical at a time when schools are lavishly equipped and the road to the highest education is without obstruction to any. In an era of five-day weeks, paid holidays for everybody, and the intensive organization of leisure, few will conceal incredulity on being told that the twentieth century has forgotten what leisure really is.

Accordingly, whoever picks up unwarned a little book just published is likely to have a shock. The book is the first work to be offered in translation of Dr. Josef Pieper, who has been making his mark as a philosopher in Germany since the war and who teaches in the University of Westphalia. It consists of two essays which are complementary, and of which the first thing to be said is that their joint argument lies athwart the current of contemporary habit and purposes and appears as a challenge to certain assumptions by which we allow – perhaps too easily – the course of our daily lives to be steered. The second thing to be said is that they are written with a winning simplicity and clarity which Mr. Dru has ably reproduced, so that, by the unprejudiced at least, they will not be denied a hearing.

What will be an obstacle to some, an incitement to others, should also be mentioned without delay. The theme of each of the two essays is announced in an epigraph. Over the first are the striking words of the Psalmist: ”Be still

and know that I am God." Over the second the quotation is from Aquinas: "The reason why the philosopher may be likened to the poet is this: both are concerned with the marvellous." The import of the two epigraphs will be considered later. The immediate point is that their sources are not fortuitous. Westphalia is a predominantly Catholic province, and Dr. Pieper is a religious. He belongs, that is, to a species which flourishes on the Continent in greater number apparently than in this country. But its rarity among us cannot be due to want of encouragement, for we welcome warmly the work of such religious philosophers as comes to us from abroad. Apart from the already well known – Jacques Maritain, Etienne Gilson, Gabriel Marcel, for example – we have lately come to know of Simone Weil and Gustave Thibon. Each has received attention in these columns, and the posthumous writings of Simone Weil have begun to appear in translation, while the first book of Gustave Thibon to be issued in English here – another came out in America six years ago – is now in the press. All those religious philosophers, however, belong to France. It was time to hear of one out of Germany, and especially of one who promises to arouse at least an equal interest.

Nor need the vigour and extent of that interest surprise the native academic philosopher absorbed in his linguistic exercises and the pursuit of "category-mistakes." The immediate appeal of the religious philosopher offers no puzzle. It is attributed to the obligation imposed on him of keeping philosophy in juxtaposition to ordinary life. His readers may find that they are confronted with abstract thought, but they can be sure that they will be shown its bearing on their own problems and aspirations. Moreover, his writings may be expected to have not only appeal but substance also; for he embarks upon his inquiries already fully equipped. That is an advantage in the philosopher which is not always appreciated. Professor Michael Oakeshott, in his brilliant introduction to the *Leviathan*, repeatedly emphasizes how Thomas Hobbes did not formulate a political philosophy till he had elaborated a complete metaphysic; and possibly we have there the reason why Hobbes is so difficult to refute. The philosopher who is a Catholic and who, like Gustave Thibon, writes of political matters and on moral questions has the same implicit support for his statements. His metaphysics can, like the metaphysics of Hobbes, be personal, even though, unlike Hobbes, he has had to make them follow an age-old pattern; in any event, the metaphysics will be there. Simone Weil during her short life remained only on the brink of the

Church, but in her writings, too, it is the depth and majesty of her religious themes which invest the expressions of her political insight with both cogency and poignancy.

Admittedly the philosophy of a religious philosopher can seem old-fashioned. Yet not only is that not necessarily a defect but also it would be foolish to imagine that the philosophy thereby somehow loses status or is any the less real philosophy. Dr. Pieper does not compose vast, massive volumes. His normal literary form is the essay that can be read at a sitting. On the present occasion eight of his booklets in German have been submitted for notice, and only one exceeds 120 pages. No doubt in some the theological element may be felt to preponderate. In *Wahrheit der Dinge* he propounds an ontological theory of truth to which, although it is grounded in the teaching of the medieval Schoolmen, a philosopher who is not also a Christian may refuse intelligibility. In *Über das Ende der Zeit* he is, as the title indicates, being eschatological, and if the views he develops in it seem more sound to some than those contained in a much-trumpeted little book published a year ago, *In the End, God...* , by the chaplain of Wells Theological College, the Rev. John A. T. Robinson, it may well be owing to qualities as a theologian which rival, if they do not surpass, his qualities as a philosopher. Let so much, and more, be freely admitted. It remains that with the religious philosopher who is a Christian we can be confident that his theology and his philosophy are distinct. For this there is a very good reason. It is in the first place, as Etienne Gilson has shown in a book unfortunately not published in this country, that philosophy in Ancient Greece was not religious and, in the second place, that this Greek philosophy – originally non-religious – has been the official philosophy of the Christian Church ever since Augustine brought it into harmony with the Church's teaching. Thus Dr. Pieper's oldest inspiration is pagan, in *Über das Schweigen Goethes* he deals with a tradition according to which, if we live and watch in profound stillness, we can win from the world "that which it cannot bring to us with fire and sword," and traces that tradition back from one pagan, Goethe, to another pagan, Pythagoras. Very properly, in order to introduce to English readers the writings of one so full of challenge, two essays dealing with the fundamental subject of epistemology have been chosen for translation (the first is called in German *Musse und Kult* and the second *Was heisst philosophieren*, and for

that subject, too, Dr. Pieper goes back first of all to the Grove and the Lyceum.

"Be still and know that I am God." The view of the nature of knowledge which Dr. Pieper attacks is, he says, the view held by Kant. For Kant, knowledge was exclusively discursive. Man's knowledge is, he taught, realized in the act of comparing, examining, relating, distinguishing, abstracting, deducing, demonstrating – "all of which," according to Dr. Pieper, "are forms of active intellectual effort." It is, he declares, that view held by Kant which has come to be taken as the simple truth, so that no other kind of knowledge is imaginable. But it is only needful to go back far enough before Kant to find that a wider view was then generally entertained. Dr. Pieper says:

> The Philosophers of antiquity thought otherwise ... The Greeks – Aristotle no less than Plato – as well as the great medieval thinkers, held that not only physical, sensuous perception, but equally man's spiritual and intellectual knowledge, included an element of pure, receptive contemplation, or, as Heraclitus says, of "listening to the essence of things."

Among the Schoolmen of the Middle Ages a distinction was drawn between two equal faculties of the mind, *ratio* and *intellectus*. Dr. Pieper continues:

> *Ratio* is the power of discursive, logical thought, of searching and of examination, of abstraction, of definition and drawing conclusions. *Intellectus*, on the other hand, is the name for the understanding in so far as it is the capacity of *simples intuitus*, of that simple vision to which truth offers itself like a landscape to the eye.

Upon this distinction Dr. Pieper bases his view of the double nature of knowledge and his view of the nature of philosophy. Although he reminds his readers of Chesterton's quip, that there is a kind of madness in which a man loses everything except his reason, he betrays no sign of despising the achievements of discursive thought. But for him it is not in those achievements that we are to seek philosophy. He regards philosophy as being altogether in the province of the *intellectus*. In Mr. Eliot's introduction, one of his merits is said to be that he equates philosophy with wisdom, and this wisdom turns out to be that which puts us at peace with ourselves and in harmony with the world around us. He shares the medieval belief that this wisdom is vouchsafed to us in a grasp of the things that exist and an unveiling of reality. **Whereas Kant may be taken as having established the assumption that knowledge is essentially the result of effort, of work, of activity, Dr. Pieper would revive the conviction of the Ancients and the Schoolmen, that the highest knowledge is attained without effort, while we are at rest, while we are passive, in a flash of insight, a stroke of**

genius, a sudden illumination, in true contemplation. For knowledge, he says, is like grace: it is a gift.

”Be still and know.” To receive the gift we need to be at rest. It is not only a discarded notion of the nature of knowledge that we are bidden to recover; it is also a discarded notion of the nature of leisure. In Dr. Pieper’s indictment of the contemporary world, no charge is meant to be more grave than that it is a world in bondage, a world that has succumbed to the idolatry of work, of activity for its own sake. He says:

> Work is the process of satisfying the ”common need” – an expression that is by no means synonymous with the notion of ”common good.” The ”common need” is an essential part of the ”common good”; but the notion of ”common good” is far more comprehensive ... More and more, at the present time, ”common good” and ”common need” are identified; and (what comes to the same thing) the world of work is becoming our entire world; it threatens to engulf us completely, and the demands of the world of work become greater and greater, till at last they make a ”total” claim upon the whole of human nature.

The charge can hardly be denied, and its accuracy is reflected in the degradation of the notion of leisure. For leisure is now treated as being for the sake of work, as required simply in order to fit the worker to resume his task, and, in addition, so great apparently is the fear that leisure may turn into idleness and sloth, leisure is now organized, every moment of it filled with activity, no matter how trivial. In the Middle Ages, on the contrary, the notions of idleness and sloth were closely associated with the inability to put oneself at leisure, and for Aristotle and his fellow-countrymen work was for the sake of leisure and not the other way round, so that an Athenian could say, ”We are unleisurely so that we may be at leisure.”

If, then, a man is to be a philosopher, if he is to undertake the philosophical act, the indispensable preliminary, according to Dr. Pieper, is that he shall step clean outside the everyday world in which the notion of work dominates; for it is only if he escapes from the ”total” claims of that world and makes himself free that he can put off its restlessness and fret, and enter into the stillness where he may wait to be visited by the intuitions and insights of philosophical knowledge. Dr. Pieper does not mean that philosophy is only of value if it is, so to speak, up in the clouds or else is nourished on whimsical fancies issuing from an oracle in one’s own breast. He means, he says, that the philosophical act should be like the effect of love or death, or like the aesthetic act or the religious act, and convulse and shake a man’s relation to the world around him. ”To see things as they are” is how H.

W. B. Joseph, in his posthumous book on Leibniz, defines the philosopher's task, and, oddly enough, the definition would be likely to win Dr. Pieper's approval. He declares that if the philosopher aims at embracing the whole of reality he does best to set out from the concrete, from the significant detail of the tangible, visible world. But also he insists that philosophy must be objective. We cannot see things as they are unless we stand back from them and unless, too, we are at peace with them.

That is, of course, impossible so long as a stream of solicitations condemns us to restlessness and fret, and we are under the strain of striving and effort. Leisure does not have to be filled with activity. There is no danger that it will degenerate into laziness and vacancy if it is true leisure; for it is then simply inward calm and being silent, silent with the silence that allows things to happen. Echoing his essay, *Über das Schweigen Goethes* , Dr. Pieper says that only the silent hear and that it is solely in silence that the human soul is able to respond to the reality of its whole environment. He quotes Newman, and it is apposite[152]; for his understanding of both the nature of philosophy and the nature of leisure are akin to Newman's. Like Aristotle he looks upon leisure as the basis of culture, and, like Plato, he considers that philosophical receptivity is best gained during an education, it being understood that the term "education" is to be contrasted with the term "training," as culture is to be opposed to instruction. There are accordingly a number of passages in Newman's *The Idea of a University* which may be said to anticipate Dr. Pieper's thought. For Newman, education "implies an action upon our mental nature, and the formation of a character ... is something individual and permanent, and is commonly spoken of in connexion with religion and virtue." The university of which Newman dreamed would have been a place of leisure in the sense of a place of rest and stillness, where young men could be receptive. Only so could the "liberal knowledge" which was Newman's other name for philosophy be acquired. And Newman's description of philosophy chimes with Dr. Pieper's:

> I consider, then, that I am chargeable with no paradox, when I speak of a Knowledge which is its own end, when I call it liberal knowledge, or a gentleman's knowledge, when I educate for it and make it the scope of a University. And still less am I incur ring such a charge, when I make this acquisition consist, not in knowledge in a vague and ordinary sense, but in that Knowledge which I have especially called Philosophy.

Newman says again that some philosophy is ”desirable, though nothing come of it, as being of itself a treasure, and a sufficient remuneration of years of labour.” In short, as Newman wanted a leisure class that had been made worthy of its leisure, so Dr. Pieper calls for the revival of a leisure class, provided it is as signed definite responsibilities. Naturally he does not imagine that the men and women who are now the most restless and who yield to every distracting call upon their attention would ever be transformed into people who sat still in contemplation and waited for aeolian visitation. It was Plato’s opinion that only the exceptionally gifted man could become a true lover of wisdom, and Dr. Pieper would not dream of dissent. But he believes that for even no more than a few to revive the quest for wisdom in silence and patience would be for the ultimate good of the whole community.

But if Dr. Pieper is at one with Newman on education and leisure and on the scope of philosophy, he goes beyond him in developing the meaning of the second of the epigraphs, the words of Aquinas, *”The reason why the philosopher may be likened to the poet is this: both are concerned with the marvellous.”* There has long been a restless anxiousness to leave nothing unexplained, and now in every sphere and to every age explanations are ever forthcoming glibly. They have one defect: nothing is thereby made intelligible. Explanation turns out to be a game of synonyms. A problem is merely restated in another form, and all that happens is that we lose the capacity of wondering, the power to marvel. Dr. Pieper believes that we should be the better for regaining that capacity and power. The irrational at the far end of every scientific inquiry has now become familiar, and we should know that little in the world can be penetrated to the heart. It is more simple and less effort to marvel, to possess ourselves of that spirit in which Sir Thomas Browne found his own life to be a continuous ”miracle” and in which Dr. Johnson, after him, was brought to reflect that, in one sense, ”all life is miraculous.” Dr. Pieper declares that when truly at leisure, we may perceive how mysterious are the workings of the universe.

Why Kant refused to recognize any knowledge that was not discursive, and why there should be the irrepressible impulse to explain things instead of wondering at them, are questions which Dr. Pieper does not examine. But the two matters are surely connected with the rise of modern science, and the fact gives direction to his argument. It was entirely thanks to philosophy that science, as an independent activity and study won its present-day importance.

One consequence was to make a few scientists pose as philosophers, but another has been to taint all post-Renaissance philosophy. Science suffers less, because, once independent, science should forgo all support from philosophy, whereas philosophy did not throw off, and has not thrown off yet, the unintended thrall of science. If at the Renaissance primary and secondary qualities were distinguished, it was mainly in order to enable astronomers and physicists to measure and number the objects of their attention. Once science was on its own there was no need for philosophers to go on worrying over the distinction. Instead, however, they allowed it to lead them into an excessive preoccupation with questions of knowledge and perception, and whenever they offered tentative solutions to those questions it was invariably in terms that suited science. As Professor Gilbert Ryle remarks in *The Concept of Mind*, "The great epistemologists, Locke, Hume, and Kant, were in the main advancing the Grammar of Science, when they thought that they were discussing parts of the occult life-story of persons acquiring knowledge." That is how Kant, for instance, came to hold that knowledge was exclusively discursive, and how for Hegel the real could be rational and the rational real. That is also how academic philosophers today came to concentrate on matters of language and meaning. Against these views Dr. Pieper is bold enough to contend, appealing for a return in philosophy to a pre-scientific wisdom and humility. After all, the great modern philosophers do leave something out. As Johann Georg Hamann, Kant's friend and fellow-citizen, remarked, they were heathen and although they may have recognized the almighty power, grandeur, holiness, and goodness of God, "of the humility of God's love for man they knew nothing."

The Spectator (London)[153]

These two short essays by a contemporary German philosopher go a long way towards a lucid explanation of the present crisis in civilisation. In criticising our attitude to work, and particularly to intellectual work, which has become increasingly identified with wage-earning by intellectual means, he shows that by our constant preoccupation with rewards and with social utility we have cut away the roots on which our culture rests. These roots grew in the leisure of the Greek philosophical schools, in the monasteries and the universities; and this leisure was not identical with idleness but with a freedom from subservience to immediate and tangible aims. Leisure, therefore, is the prerequisite for any cultural revival, which can only originate from a leisured and dedicated caste. As Professor Pieper sees it, much of our most strenuous activity is in fact carefully organised and heavily publicised idleness, for it is activity to no purpose; even the rewards it gains us bring us none of this vital and refreshing leisure. His attitude is that of a Thomist more conscious of Christianity's debt to Plato and Aristotle than of its Hebrew origins, and seemingly unaware of the support he might gain from his argument from the earliest Hindu caste laws. He has, however, worked back sufficiently close to essentials to be able to argue simply and without the use of philosophical jargon. The first essay in this little book should be read by anyone – and young people in particular – anxious to come to some conclusions about the nature of society.

Dr. Pieper's short book contains the title essay and one other on "The Philosophical Act": the latter is reviewed by Mr. Eliot in his preface, and it is here only necessary to give a brief indication of its theme. With refreshing clarity and directness, Dr. Pieper opposes the rationalist tradition of most professional philosophers of the last two hundred years, who have felt it necessary for the freedom of philosophy to insist on complete independence from theology. "There is no such thing as a philosophy which does not receive its impulse and impetus from a prior and uncritically accepted interpretation of the world as a whole," says Dr. Pieper. "It is in the field of theology, and quite independently of experience and previously to it, that the object of man's desire – 'wisdom as possessed by God' – becomes visible, and it is this aim which provides the impulse and guides the course of philosophical enquiry in its loving search as it moves through the field of experience." The argument leading to this statement is lucid and humane; it fulfills the requirement which, Mr. Eliot says, common sense demands – that philosophy must deal with insight and wisdom; and it would lead us forward to positive interpretations of personal and social action. If we ask whether it is acceptable we can first call to mind the difficulty which scientists and "scientific" philosophers are having with first principles and the insistence of, for example, Professor Polanyi on the faith which must underlie science; but we can also remember that a belief in the "given-ness" of first knowledge was almost universally held by the philosophers of antiquity, by poets and prophets, by Jung today.

The essay on leisure is in some ways more immediately stimulating, though of less fundamental importance. Protestant culture in particular seems today to have a morality (of a sort) almost wholly detached from theology, and a theology which stops short, in general practice, with a kind of organisational chart of the Trinity, or a historical morality play in which history and myth are inextricably confused. What it lacks, and what Catholics occasionally get from an Encyclical, is a searching analysis of social function in terms of religious philosophy. This is just what Dr. Pieper has done for the concept of leisure. Perhaps his most striking point is that leisure exists on a

different plane from ”the world of work” (utility) – it is a state and activity of the soul which is concerned with the divine, and this gives meaning to the words ”cult,” ”culture,” ”celebration,” ”feast.” The success of Dr. Pieper’s analysis is proved in the new illumination he gives to concepts of work and the worker state, wages, the proletariat; it explains with precision how the Communist slogan – ”From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs” becomes in Stalin’s mouth (1933): ”It is not correct that the worker should be rewarded according to his needs,” and in the 1936 Constitution ”... to each according to his work”; while the Catholic statement is ”The primary right of the worker is to a wage which will enable him to support a family.” Just as the conception of a temple – a piece of land set aside to God which is not used for utilitarian purposes – is foreign to the factory-state, so the idea of a piece of time set aside neither for work nor for recovery in order to work, but for another purpose in its own right, is foreign to utilitarian planning. Ruskin, seeing wealth and value in that which avails for life, would have raised a cheer for this argument which provides the theological basis for what he saw intuitively. At the present moment, when the air is thick with sociological studies of leisure and educational pronouncements on its use, it is of extreme value to have some tight and principled analysis. I believe that I shall be only one of many for whom Dr. Pieper has done that invaluable service – the rearrangement of whole groups of thought both into a wider consistency and on deeper support.

New York Times Book Review

Josef Pieper, a German Catholic philosopher, is unknown to the American layman, and the career of his small but profound book in this country can teach us something about our capacity to receive criticism from a point of view to which most of us are hostile. Our failure to reach a thorough understanding of the rapid totalitarian drift of Western culture, says Pieper, is the result of an earlier failure of thought which occurred when philosophy was completely divorced (at the time of Kant) from theology. This looks at first like a comparatively useless academic distinction, but its consequences in Pieper's profound insight are impressive and even formidable.

The "emancipation" of philosophy left it vulnerable to the modern mystique of "work," which has eliminated from philosophy the ancient pursuit of wisdom based upon a just notion of "leisure." The result is that philosophy has become either the errand boy of the natural sciences or the playboy of linguistic shell-games whose name at present is logical positivism.

On this point T. S. Eliot in his introduction observes: "For as surrealism seemed to provide a method of producing works of art without imagination, so logical positivism seems to provide a method of philosophizing without insight and wisdom." The force of this observation may well be lost on us, who as a people have not had a vigorous theology since the eighteenth century. Largely because of this lack we take for granted a long chain of inevitable "separations" – not only of theology from philosophy, but of church from state, religion from education, work from play, morality from business, art from society, leisure from work, love from sex, the individual from the community.

The difference between work and leisure which we take for granted today follows the pre-supposition that leisure is merely compensatory – an empty compulsive escape from dehumanizing labor. This is precisely the theme of Josef Pieper's book. His ultimate purpose is to restore the identity of leisure and the contemplative life which has a tradition, even older than Christianity, in Plato and Aristotle. Although contemplative leisure is "listening" and receptive, it is not passive and slothful. It is rather a quality that the social man, when his being is properly ordered toward a certain end, may achieve in

his ordinary activity, which may be quite as strenuous as the compulsive escape.

From this point of view the end of man is not labor, for the end of labor must be the end of man himself. This end cannot be the ”loving search for *any* kind of wisdom,” but rather the ”wisdom which is possessed by God.” We must look sharply at the word ”search.” It distinguishes philosophy, whose search is never done, from Christian theology, or the ordering of revelation, which its final but which we never fully understand.

We never ”understand” it because *ratio*, or pure reason, is only operative and empty, and without wisdom. And this kind of reason, the servile work of the mind has suppressed the liberal and receptive leisure of *intellectus*, the spiritual activity of the free man. Thus, though philosophy and theology are distinct modes of the mind, philosophy has no end without theology: it doesn’t know where it is going.

Pieper then proceeds to a comprehensive indictment of a decaying civilization. The modern reduction of all human action, including philosophy, to servile labor is daily creating a proletarian society from top to bottom, from executive to machine tender. This society uses men for ends that defy definition beyond the latest ”project” or ”plan,” economic, social or political. Pieper’s message for us is plain. The American democracy is not blissfully immune to the Western blight; we have in fact done our part in generating the totalitarian epidemic. The idolatry of the machine, the worship of mindless know–how, the infantile cult of youth and the common man – all this points to our peculiar leader ship in the drift toward the slave society. ”Leisure the Basis of Culture” may help to show us that we had not known all this as well as we had supposed.

The popular notion of leisure as opportunity for ”escape” leaves many deeply puzzled by the words of the psalmist: ”Have leisure and know that I am God.” In order to understand the words we must recover a loftier, more classical concept of leisure as an affirmative condition (the very opposite of idleness) by which man transcends the world of work and, having transcended it, is enabled to contemplate those things which lie beyond it – himself, the universe, and God.

This concept of leisure is one of the foundations of Western culture, more, one of the indispensable conditions without which man is something less than man – a mere worker, a functionary, a thing. It is the subject of a brilliant examination in two essays by the German philosopher Josef Pieper, now published under the title *Leisure, the Basis of Culture*.

The first and title essay is a profound investigation, historically and sociologically, into the nature of leisure itself. The second essay, ”The Philosophical Act,” studies philosophy as leisure’s highest good, the human act *par excellence*. This essay is a logical extension of the first because, as Dr. Pieper observes, philosophy, which is the eternal search for wisdom, presupposes ”silence, a contemplative attention to things, in which man begins to see how worthy of reverence they really are.”

The basis for both essays is the author’s thesis: ”Culture depends for its very foundation on leisure, and leisure, in its turn, is not possible unless it has a durable and living link with the *cultus*, with divine worship.” A quotation from Plato, which introduces the essays, remarkably illustrates the antique origins and classical importance of this thesis:

> But the gods, taking pity on mankind, born to work, laid down the succession of recurring Feasts to restore them from their fatigues ... so that nourishing themselves in festive companionship with the gods, they should again stand upright and erect.

The nature of leisure is thus basically united to contemplation in the great tradition of [W]estern culture, and both are dependent on a real awareness of the transcendent and the Divine. Here lies the secret of freedom.

The difficulty is that modern civilization has placed the idea of leisure in double jeopardy: the triumph of a purely utilitarian social idealism has left little room and less regard for a concept which produces nothing immediate

and concrete toward ”progress”; the very idea of a ”leisure class” has fallen into disrepute as an aristocratic anachronism, something incompatible with egalitarianism. And the growing externalization of life, the almost universal phenomenon of an activist mass-culture, has emptied the virtue of contemplation of any meaning for the majority of modern men, and left them dismally unprepared to cope with leisure in the few moments when they may still have an opportunity for it.

Boredom and ennui[157], a frantic search for diversion, are the common reactions to an hour, or a day, of quiet. The modern Cleopatra in Eliot's *Waste Land* desperately asking ”What shall I do now? What shall I do? ... What shall we do tomorrow? What shall we ever do?” undoubtedly gives voice to one of contemporary man's most pathetic problems. Manufacturers of television sets and producers of endless third–rate movies have made their fortunes providing an answer, an answer itself symptomatic of the problem.

It does not seem far-fetched to speculate that future historians may mark down this disappearance of any popular regard for or understanding of the nature of leisure, and, at the same time, the near-hysterical search for external diversion, as one of the major culture crises of modern civilization. And there can be little doubt that it followed upon the victory of the bourgeois spirit (with all that this implies) over the older Hellenistic-Judeo-Christian tradition of [W]estern culture. For leisure, and its highest goal, contemplation, lie at the heart of this tradition, but they are eternal strangers to bourgeois value. In his memorable essay, *”The Bourgeois Mind,”* Nicholas Berdyaev has defined the state of being bourgeois as a state distinguished by its particular ”soullessness,” its constitutional inability to comprehend the heroic and the transcendent. Consequently, the genuine bourgeois, to the extent that he is a bourgeois, is at heart the enemy of Christ. Berdyaev quotes Leon Bloy's bitter aside of bourgeois religiosity: ”The Lord Jesus is very decorative in shop windows.”

When the bourgeois is a social reformer, when he occupies himself with building a ”better world,” he reduces man to a functionary, a thing, and robs him of that unique dignity and freedom which consist in his transcending the realm of ”things.” The totality of reality is thus something to be used rather than something to be reverenced, and concepts such as leisure and

contemplation lose all meaning, become, indeed, a scandal. Both God and man are exiles from a bourgeois world.

So complete has been the triumph of the bourgeois spirit in the modern world that, in Christopher Dawson's words, "we are all more or less bourgeois, and our civilization is bourgeois from top to bottom." To look for the bourgeois, then, in one economic group or in some particular ideological faction is to mistake the nature of the bourgeois spirit, which is a universal one. (It is ironic that the "bourgeois" is the favorite whipping boy of Marxist propaganda, but, once the true nature of the bourgeois spirit is understood, Marxism must appear as its terrible, but final and logical *reductio ad absurdum*.) The bourgeois spirit is everywhere, in the schools, in the press, in the legislatures, in the churches. It is found among rich and poor, among capitalists and Communists, among Catholics and Protestants and Jews.

This triumph of the bourgeois spirit has witnessed the almost universal acceptance of the bourgeois virtues – the virtues of the practical and immediately useful, of work for work's own sake, of the "rational." We need only consult our own experience to realize the extent of this triumph in our world and the extreme difficulty of rejecting its implications.

We live in a world which has come under the control of a "mystique of work," and we are all, more or less, wedded to the practical. A "good" education is one which prepares one for a "good" job, and a "good" job is one which pay lots of money. A "successful" man is one who has accumulated a significant amount of the world's goods, and "used" them in a practical way.

Josef Pieper defines the proletarian as "the man who is fettered to the process of work." Every man whose life is completely filled by his work, he tells us, "is a proletarian because his life has shrunk inwardly, and contracted, with the result that he can no longer act significantly outside his work, and perhaps can no longer even conceive of such a thing."

Thus defined, the great majority of modern men are proletarians; the mystique of work controls more and more of life. Leisure itself, in this world, becomes a mere necessary stop between rounds of work and its value is seen as preparing us to work more efficiently on the morrow[158]. It is at once an escape from work and a prelude to more work. Civilization thus progresses toward the level of the bee-hive.

”It is necessary for the perfection of human society,” Aquinas wrote, ”that there should be men who devote their lives to contemplation.” Bourgeois civilization, in failing to understand and value the true meaning and lofty dignity of leisure, has lost the concept of contemplation, and, in so doing, has lost the concept of man. For it is in leisure, genuinely understood, that man rises above the level of a thing to be used and enters the realm where he can be at home with the potentialities of his own nature, where, with no concern for doing, no ties to the immediate, the particular, and the practical, he can attend to the love of wisdom, can begin leading a truly human life. Thus, transcending the world of work, man ceases to be a proletarian. He begins to function as man.

”There is one institution in the world,” Pieper reminds us, ”which forbids useful activity and servile work on particular days, and in this way prepares, as it were, a sphere for a non-proletarian existence.” The Church, through her liturgy and cycles of feasts, invites man to that leisure and contemplation where he can again ”stand upright and erect.” It provides one of the last remaining refuges from a work–a–day bourgeois world.

Leisure the Basis of Culture is a profound and rich book. It should remind us that if we become so engaged in the activities connected with ”saving” Western civilization that, in the process, we lose what capacity for leisure is left us, then we can never ”save” Western civilization at all, but only that dreary counterfeit, the world of the bourgeois functionary. We will have prepared the way for the final and universal reign of the sub-human.

The Nation [159]

The two essays contained in this small volume are the first works of the German philosopher Josef Pieper to be published in English. Professor Pieper is a Catholic, and his largest purpose is to show that divine worship is the foundation of culture and that genuine philosophy is inseparable from theology.

The book leaves the reader both stimulated and unsatisfied, for while the author is often an excellent critic when pointing out the cultural failures of modern society in the West, he is less happy in his ideas about the dependence of culture and philosophy upon religion and theology – at least to a reader who does not share his religious convictions.

In the first essay, which gives the book its title, Pieper discusses the relation between leisure and work, saying, quite rightly, that the doctrine of work – of *practical* industry both physical and intellectual – has assumed an importance out of proportion to its place in life. Western culture is endangered by this emphasis upon the immediately *useful* to the detriment of the *good* – the good being those values dealt with by disciplines having no proper use in economic gain or in propaganda. Pieper clarifies this distinction between the useful and the good by contrasting ”wage” and ”honorarium,” ”servile arts” and ”liberal arts.” He points to the Soviet Union as the worst example of the modern tendency to judge everything by its immediate utilitarian value.

But the seeds of this tyranny of the useful, he argues, are found in all Western countries, and the emphasis upon work, or the practical, is found not only in physical production but also in intellectual matters. To discuss the emphasis on the practical in matters of the mind, the author takes two terms from the scholastic theory of knowledge, maintaining that *ratio* – the power of logical thought — has been stressed in modern philosophy to the detriment of *intellectus*, which is ”that simple vision to which truth offers itself like a landscape to the eyes.” To think by *ratio* is work, and hard work at that, but it is the unique quality of *intellectus* that it is effortless; thus in all true knowledge there is a combination of effort and ease, of work and vision.

Leisure is impossible when the doctrine of work becomes dominant over passive receptiveness and the wonder that things exist, the *wonder* which is the source of all philosophy. And leisure is not simply spare time for pleasure; it is the opposite of *acedia* in the old sense of fretfulness, of disharmony in the soul. The author quotes Baudelaire to illustrate this. ”One must work, if not from taste then at least from despair. For, to reduce everything to a single truth: work is less boring than pleasure.” (But Baudelaire was more complicated than this, for he also said that one of the most terrible things he could imagine was to be a *useful* person. He meant this precisely in the sense discussed in this book.)

Leisure, then, is an attitude of mind and a condition of the soul. It is a form of silence in which the soul’s capacity to ”answer” to the reality of the world is left undiminished. And this leisure, insists Pieper, has its origin in ”celebration,” which is the point at which the qualities leisure – effortlessness, calm, and relaxation – fuse and become one. ”But if celebration is the cause of leisure, then leisure can only be made possible ... upon the same basis as the celebration of a feast: and that formation is *divine worship*.”

Chicago Tribune[160]

Ever feel that you were being swallowed up by your job or activities? Ever wonder if you were being selfish or lazy in resisting or resenting being swallowed up? A German professor has provided a powerful argument that it is a person's duty to self and others not to be swallowed.

Most readers will expect little excitement from an academic philosopher, and they have reason. Pieper is exceptional. He has subjects involved in everyone's life: he has theses that are so counter to the prevailing trends as to be sensational, and he has a style (and/or his translator has a style) that is memorably clear and direct.

The extent and quality of leisure and philosophizing in a man's life are of tremendous importance – not only to the man but also to society. How tremendously important the readers of Pieper are in the best position to know.

His theses are, in part, that leisure is prerequisite to culture and full humanity, that wonder ("the beginning of philosophy") and joy go together, and that neither leisure nor philosophy can be fully realized in the absence of religious experience. These propositions are not widely held. The man who urges them with persuasiveness and power is challenging the way we live now at basic points.

Pieper champions an old and honorable philosophical tradition though one now largely in eclipse. It is that the best things in life are freely given, not won with effort. **Contemplation, it is alleged, can yield a more precious knowledge than can rigorous reasoning.**

"The gift of self-reliance and independence," say Pieper, "has always been regarded as the decisive element in personality in the philosophical tradition of Europe." This gift is characteristically a fruit of the philosophical act, performed at leisure, by a worshipful man in a meaningful religious context, says Pieper. It is a gift repudiated in the "workers utopias" in which humanity is sacrificed to social functions. And it is a gift forfeited in the West when we justify bits of leisure for the sake of greater on-the-job output, when we spend our free time in idleness and distractions instead of in genuinely contemplative leisure.

These essays, in their author's own words, "were not designed to give advice and draw up a line of action; they were meant to make men think." They attain their objective. They make their readers think about fundamental, personal issues, and to highly rewarding effect.

©

San Francisco Chronicle [161]

Pieper, a German philosopher, is a Catholic grounded on Plato, Aristotle and the Scholastics. This is his first book to be translated into English. His concept of leisure is not idleness ”but freedom and detachment of the human spirit which enables a man to contemplate and be at peace in those worlds of ideals from which he draws strength and nourishes his soul.” The book is made up of two essays, the one used as title and one called ”The Philosophical Act.” In the introduction T. S. Eliot claims for Pieper that he restores insight and wisdom to philosophy.

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The passage from Plato, quoted at the beginning of the book, was taken from *The Laws* (653c-d). The line from the Psalm (45,11) was taken from the Septuagint Greek version, which uses the aorist imperative form of the verb *scholazein*: *scholasate* (”be at leisure”). Joseph Bernhart said that during the Middle Ages, this sentence acquired ”the status of an axiom of mystical knowledge-doctrine” (*Die philosophische Mystik des Mittelalters* [München, 1922], p. 83).

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Notes

[←1]

The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism [transl. by Talcott Parsons] (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958, p. 264, note 24). Weber is quoting Nikolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf.

[←2]

Nicomachean Ethics X, 7 (1177b4-6).

[←3]

Politics VII, 3 (1337b33)

[←4]

Ernst Niekisch, *Die dritte imperiale Figur* (Berlin, 1935).

[←5]

Ernst Jünger, *Der Arbeiter. Herrschaft und Gestalt* (Hamburg,1932).

[←6]

Blätter und Steine (Hamburg, 1934), p. 202.

[←7]

I. Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, ed. R. Schmidt (Leipzig, 1944) p. 91.

[←8]

Bernhard Jansen, *Die Geschichte der Erkenntislehre in der neueren Philosophie bis Kant* (Paderborn, 1940), p. 235.

[←9]

"Von einem neuerdings erhobenen vornehmen Ton in der Philosophie," *Akademie-Ausgabe* 8, pp. 387406.

[←10]

Diels-Kranz, ed., *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, frag. 112.

[←11]

Q.XV,1.

[←12]

Quaestio disputata de virtutibus cardinalibus 1.

[←13]

Kant, op. cit (see note 4 above), p. 393.

[←14]

Maximen und Reflexionen, ed. Günther Müller (Stuttgart, 1943), no. 1415.

[←15]

Hermann Rauschning, *Gespräche mit Hitler* (Zurich/New York, 1940), quoted according to the selections published in the journal *Die Wandlung* (I, 1945/6), pp. 684 ff.

[←16]

Kant, op. cit., p. 390.

[←17]

"Die Philosophen" (Gewissenskrupel): *Gerne dient' ich den Freunden, doch tu ich es leider mit Neigung /Und so wurmt es mir oft, dass ich nicht tugendhaft bin*.

[←18]

Antisthenes' statement is found in Diogenes Laertius, *The Lives and Teachings of the Philosophers, VI, 1, 2*.

[←19]

Ibid.; a work of Antisthenes (no longer extant) bore the title, *The Greater Hercules, or On Power*.

[←20]

Anton Gail told me of a portrait of Erasmus, painted by Hans Holbein, in which Erasmus has his hands resting on a book with the title *Herakleou Ponoi* [Greek for "the Labors of Hercules"] - *Erasmi Roterodami*.

[←21]

Carlyle, as quoted by Robert Langewiesche (in an anthology of Carlyle's writings, in German translation [Königstein, n.d.], p. 28).

[←22]

Cf. Wilhelm Nestle, *Griechischen Geistesgeschichte von Homer bis Lukian* (Stuttgart, 1944), pp. 313 ff.

[←23]

Ibid., p. 314.

[←24]

Transmitted by Clement of Alexandria, Stromata,II, 107, 2. In the same passage it is also reported that "He considered the desire of love as an evil of nature."

[←25]

Cf. Diogenes Laertius, VI, 1, 5.

[←26]

Summa theologiae II-II, Q. 123, a. 12, ad 2um.

[←27]

Ibid., II-II, Q. 27, a. 8, ad 3um.

[←28]

Ibid., II-II, Q. 108, a. 2.

[←29]

Quaest. disp. de caritate 8, ad l7um.

[←30]

Commentary on the Sentences I, d. 2 (*expositio textus*).

[←31]

Ernst Jünger, *Blätter und Steine*, p. 179.

[←32]

Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* II-II, Q. 141, a. 6, ad 1um.

[←33]

Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra gentiles*, IV, 23: ”It is the role of the Holy Spirit, to be given”; and *Summa theologiae* I, Q. 38, a. 2 ad lum: ”The Holy Spirit, Who comes forth as Love from the Father, is truly called a ”gift.”

[←34]

Summa theologiae I, Q. 21, a. 4.

[←35]

Commentary on Aristotle's Metaphysics I, 3.

[←36]

Newman, *Idea of a University*, V, 6.

[←37]

Ibid.

[←38]

Blätter und Steine, p. 176.

[←39]

The Idea of a University, V. 5.

[←40]

Taken from Goethe's *Conversations with Eckermann*.

[←41]

Taken from the preface to Hegel's *Wissenschaft der Logic*, where the fuller context says that "the contemplation of the Eternal and of a life that serves it alone" is motivated "not for the sake of use, but for the sake of blessing."

[←42]

Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on the Sentences* IV, D. 26, 1, 2.

[←43]

For more on *acedia*, see Josef Pieper, *Über die Hoffnung* , 5th ed. (Munich, 1955), pp. 58 ff.

[←44]

The Sickness unto Death: A Christian Psychological Exposition for Upbuilding and Awakening, in *Kierkegaard's Writings*, vol. 19, ed. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton, 1980), pp. 49 ff.

[←45]

See Thomas Aquinas, *De malo* 11,3.

[←46]

W. Sombart, *Der Bourgeois* (Leipzig, 1913), p. 322; cf. also (28) [5]

[←47]

Max Scheler, *Vom Umsturz der Werte* (Leipzig, 1919), vol. 2, p.293.

[←48]

Johannes Haessle, *Das Arbeitsethos der Kirche nach Thomas von Aquin und Leo XIII: Untersuchungen uber den Wirtschaftsgeist des Katholicismus*. (Freiburg in Briesgau, 1923), p. 31.

[←49]

De unitate intellectus.

[←50]

Johannes Haessle (see note 6 above), p. 34.

[←51]

Summa theologiae II-II, Q. 35, 3, ad 1um; *De malo* Q. 11, 3 ad 2um.

[←52]

Sept. 12, 1939. I owe my knowledge of this passage to the kind permission of the poet's widow.

[←53]

Fragment 75 (Diels, ed.).

[←54]

Karl Kerényi, *Die antike Religion* (Amsterdam, 1940), p. 66.

[←55]

Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra gentiles* II, 96.

[←56]

"As God, Who made things, did not rest *in* the things He made, but rested *from* them, in Himself ... just so should we learn to rest not *in* our things or *in* His things, as if they were the goal, but rather in God Himself, in Whom our happiness consists. This is the reason why man should work for six days in His own works, in order to rest on the seventh day, and be free for the worship of God. But for Christians, such rest is appointed not only temporarily, but for eternity." *Commentary on the Sentences*, II, D. 15, 3. 3.

[←57]

The black American author, Richard Wright, according to a report in the international journal, *Die Umschau* 1, no.2, pp. 214-16.

[←58]

Nicomachean Ethics X, 7 (11779,2728).

[←59]

On the questionable value of a generalized cultural "Traditionalism," cf. Josef Pieper, *Über den Begriff der Tradition* (Köln u. Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1958).

[←60]

Trübners Deutsche Wörterbuch (Berlin, 1939 and later), I, 118.

[←61]

Plato, *Theaetetus* 175e-176a.

[←62]

Pius XI, Encyclical Letter *Quadragesimo anno*, no. 63.

[←63]

Ibid., no. 119.

[←64]

My own essays, written in 1932 and 1933, *Thesen zur sozialen Politik* (3rd. ed.; Freiburg im Breisgau, 1947), even though they are *expressly* and quite consciously limited to the political level, now are in need of thorough correction in this respect. It is characteristic of the "Younger

Generation" between the First and Second World Wars, that as a whole they expected entirely too much from purely political measures.

[←65]

Published in the first volume of the journal *Les temps modernes* and reported also in the international review Die Umschau 1, no. 1.

[←66]

Iosif Vissarionovich Stalin, in a speech clearly designed for the current "socialist" movement: "Neue Verhältnisse neue Aufgaben des wirtschaftlichen Aufbaus" (June 23, 1931). Published in Joseph Stalin, *Questions about Leninism* (Moscow, 1947), p. 406.

[←67]

Quadragesimo anno, no. 71.

[←68]

P. J. Proudhon, *Die Sonntagsfeier, aus dem Gesichtspunkt des öffentlichen Gesundheitswesens, der Moral, der Familien-und bürgerlichen Verhältnisse betrachtet* (Kassel, 1850) [German translation of French original, published Besançon, 1839].

[←69]

Ibid.,p.18.

[←70]

Ibid., p.vi.

[←71]

Aristotle, *Politics*, VIII, 3 (1337b35).

[←72]

Translator's note: The German word *kult* is taken from the Latin *colere*, the origin of English "cultivation" and "culture." The repetitive, persistent, and loving care of the farmer (cf. agriculture) is not clearly enough indicated in the English "worship."

[←73]

Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum (Leipzig, 1942 and later), article on "Arbeitsruhe" [rest from labor], col. 590.

[←74]

Charles Baudelaire, *Intimate Journals* [translated by Christopher Isherwood] (New York: Random House, 1930), p. 67.

[←75]

Thomas Carlyle, "Work and Do Not Despair," [supra II, n.16], p. 21.

[←76]

Cf. Hermann Usener, *"Organisation der wissenschafthichen Arbeit,"* in *Vorträge und Aufsätze* (Leipzig-Berlin, 1914), pp. 76 ff.

[←77]

Goethe's Letter to Reimer, March 26, 1814.

[←78]

Translator's note: The German word for "leisure" is *Musse*, or "the Muse" - that is, it recalls explicitly the ancient Greek mythological context, whereby "the Muses" were divine patrons of the liberal arts.

[←79]

Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* III, Q. 79, a. 5.

[←80]

Joseph Pascher, *Eucharistia: Gestalt und Vollzug* (Munster, 1948), p. 266 ff.

[←81]

Christmas Preface of the *Missale Romanum* (also the Preface for Corpus Christi).

[←82]

Commentary on the Sentences IV, d. 26, 1.2.

[←83]

M. Heidegger, *Was ist Metaphysik?* (Frankfurt, 1943), p. 22. The formulation, of course, is not new: it was used by Leibniz: "Pourquoy il y a plustt quelque chose que rien?" Leibniz, *Philosophische Schriften* (Darmstadt, 1965, ff.), vol. I, p. 426. Cf. also Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka, *Why Is There Something Rather Than Nothing?* (Assen, Holland, 1966).

[←84]

Konrad Weiss, *In Exitu* (first verses) - which first appeared in the volume *Die cumäische Sibylle* (Munich, 1921), more readily accessible now in the collected edition: Konrad Weiss, *Gedichte*, 1914-1939 (Munich: Kösel-Verlag, 1961).

[←85]

Commentary on the Metaphysics I, 3.

[←86]

Protagoras 318 ff.

[←87]

In Plato's dialogue *Theaetetus*, Socrates criticizes those philosophers who concern themselves with distant, abstract things but neglect practical affairs closer to hand, and illustrates this with an anecdote about Thales: "I will illustrate my meaning ... by the jest which the clever witty Thracian handmaid is said to have made about Thales, when he fell into a well as he was looking

up at the stars. *She said that he was so eager to know what was going on in heaven, that he could not see what was before his feet.* This is a jest which is equally applicable to all philosophers. For the philosopher is wholly unacquainted with his next-door neighbour; he is ignorant, not only of what he is doing, but he hardly knows whether he is a man or an animal; he is searching into the essence of man, and busy in enquiring what belongs to such a nature to do or suffer different from any other." (Plato, Theaetetus, translated by Benjamin Jowett, Part 1, p. 39)

[←88]

Theaetetus 174.

[←89]

Phaedo 59ab.

[←90]

Symposium 172 f.

[←91]

The Idea of a University, V, 5.

[←92]

Commentary on the Metaphysics I, 3.

[←93]

Idea of a University, V, 5.

[←94]

Commentary on the Metaphysics I, 3.

[←95]

Novum organum I, 3; I, 81.

[←96]

Discourse on Method, 6.

[←97]

Cf. Thomas, *Quaestiones disputatae de veritate* II, 2.

[←98]

Gregory the Great, as quoted by Thomas in the passage just cited.

[←99]

Der unsterbliche Geist in der Natur (Hamburg, 1938), p. 63.

[←100]

Ibid., p. 76.

[←101]

Von Uexküll-Kriszat, *Streifzüge durch die Umwelten von Tieren und Menschen* (Berlin, 1934), p. 40.

[←102]

Die Lebenslehre (Potsdam-Zurich, 1930), p. 131.

[←103]

De Anima III, 8 (431b).

[←104]

Quaestiones disputatae de veritate I, 1.

[←105]

Summa contra gentiles III, 112.

[←106]

Quaestiones disputatae de veritate II, 2.

[←107]

Berlin, 1940.

[←108]

Cf. Josef Pieper, *Living the Truth* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1989).

[←109]

Summa theologiae I, Q. 76, a. 5, ad 4um.

[←110]

Quaestiones disputatae de potentia Dei 5, 10, ad 5.

[←111]

Quaestio disputata de virtutibus cardinalibus I.

[←112]

Plato, *Meno* 85; 81.

[←113]

Theaetetus 175.

[←114]

Theaetetus 155.

[←115]

Conversations with Eckermann, Feb. 18, 1829.

[←116]

Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie, Sämtliche Werke (Stuttgart, 1927 ed.), vol. 18, p. 69.

[←117]

W. Windelband, *Einleitung in die Philosophie* (Tübingen, 1923), p. 6.

[←118]

Quaestio disputata de potentia Dei 6, 2.

[←119]

I-II, Q. 32, a. 8.

[←120]

Rhetoric 1, 2.

[←121]

Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I-II, Q. 32, a. 8.

[←122]

Pensées, no. 172.

[←123]

Summa contra gentiles 4, 33.

[←124]

Ibid.

[←125]

Symposium 204.

[←126]

Commentary on the Apostles' Creed, Introduction.

[←127]

Summa theologiae I-II, Q. 31, a. 5.

[←128]

Briefwechsel zwischen Wilhelm Dilthey und dem Grafen Paul Yorck v. Wartenburg, 1877-1897 (Hall/Saale, 1923), p. 39.

[←129]

Phaedrus 278.

[←130]

Commentary on the Gospel of John I, 11.

[←131]

Commentary on the Metaphysics I, 3.

[←132]

In a letter to Zelter, Oct. 27, 1827.

[←133]

Metaphysics 983a.

[←134]

Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* II-II, Q. 9, a. 2.

[←135]

Metaphysics 983a.

[←136]

I, 3.

[←137]

Phaedrus 274.

[←138]

Laws 715.

[←139]

Metaphysics 1074b.

[←140]

Philebus 16c.

[←141]

Symposium 189c-193d.

[←142]

hubris: (noun) 1. pride: excessive pride or arrogance 2. excessive ambition: the excessive pride and ambition that usually leads to the downfall of a hero in classical tragedy. [Late 19th century, Greek].

[←143]

Philebus 16.

[←144]

In the course of the Bonn "Week for Higher Education" in 1947, it was brought to my attention, that in the works of Walter F. Otto, a renewal of the life of *ancient* theology can be ascertained so that one no longer can say that the single available theology is the Christian. In reply, I would say, that "admiration" is not the same thing as "faith." Does someone seriously want to maintain that in this new Hellenism, the ancient theology is precisely "taken as the truth," is so "fully believed in" that in the extremity of an existentially threatening situation (such as the approach of death), one would really pray to Apollo or Dionysus? If this is not the case, then one cannot be speaking of theology "in the full sense of the word."

[←145]

Garrigou-Lagrange, *Der Sinn für das Geheimnis und das Hell-Dunkel des Gestes* (Paderborn, 1937), pp. 112 f.

[←146]

M. J. Scheeben, *Die Mysterien des Christentums*, ed. Josef Höfer, final edition (Freiburg, 1941), pp. 8 f.

[←147]

The interpretation is that of Gerhard Krüger, *Einsicht und Leidenschaft: Das Wesen des Platonischen Denkens — Insight and passion: the nature of Platonic thinking* (Frankfurt, 1939), p. 301.

[←148]

Summa theologiae I, Q. 1, 6; II-II, Q. 45, a. 2.

[←149]

Summa theologiae II-II, Q. 45, a. 2.

[←150]

De divinis nominibus 2,4. (Quoted by Thomas, ibid.).

[←151]

"Be Still and Know" (February 1, 1952), p. 85. Copyright © 1952 by the *Times Literary Supplement*. Used with permission.

[←152]

apposite: (adjective) **particularly appropriate**: especially well suited to the circumstances [Early 17th century, from Latin *appositus*, past participle of *apponere* "add to, put near" — *ponere* "put" (see position)]

[←153]

J.M.C., review, vol. 188 (May 30, 1952), p. 726. Copyright © 1952 by *The Spectator*. Used with permission.

[←154]

Guy Hunter, "The Sabbath Made for Man," vol. 43 (April 5, 1952), p.410. Copyright © *New Statesman*, 1998. Used with permission.

[←155]

Allen Tate, "In Search of the 'Wisdom Possessed by God'" (February 24, 1952), p. 12. Copyright © 1998 by the *New York Times* Company. Reprinted by Permission.

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William P. Clancy, review, vol. 56 (April 11, 1952), p. 18. © Commonweal Foundation, reprinted with permission.

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ennui: [noun] 1. Etymology: French, from Old French *enui* — annoyance, from *enuier* — to vex, from Late Latin *inodiare* — to make loathsome (Date: 1732); 2. a feeling of weariness and dissatisfaction — boredom.

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morrow (noun) 1. The following day: resolved to set out on the morrow. 2. The time immediately subsequent to a particular event. 3. Archaic The morning. [Middle English morwe, morow, variant of morwen, from Old English morgen, morning]

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Carl Houde, "The Useful and the Good," vol. 175 (October 18, 1952), p.362. Reprinted with permission from the October 18, 1952, issue of *The Nation* magazine.

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A. C. Ames, "Helpful Book on Leisure Its Use, Value" (April 13, 1952), p. 6. Copyright 1952 by the *Chicago Tribune*. Used with permission.

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J.V., review (March 16, 1952), p. 22. Copyright © 1952 by the *San Francisco Chronicle*. Used with permission.

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